FUNDAMENTALS OF THE OFFENSE

SUBCOURSE NUMBER IN0500

EDITION D

UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA 31905-5593

5 CREDIT HOURS

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SUBCOURSE OVERVIEW

This subcourse is designed to teach the basic information on the fundamentals and purpose of the offense. This subcourse contains information on platoon movement formations, conducting movement to contact, fire and movement, tactical control measures, and consolidation and reorganization of a platoon following enemy contact.

There are no prerequisites for this subcourse.

This subcourse reflects the doctrine which was current at the time it was prepared. In your own work situation, always refer to the latest publications.

The words "he", "him", "his", and "men", when used in this publication, represent both the masculine and feminine genders unless otherwise stated.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Action:	Identify the fundamentals and purpose of the offense; select platoon movement formations; identify the considerations for conducting movement to contact; identify the procedures for directing fire and movement of a platoon against an enemy position; identify tactical control measures (offense); and consolidate and reorganize a platoon following enemy contact (offense).
Condition:	Given the subcourse material contained in this subcourse.
Standard:	To demonstrate competency of this subcourse, you must achieve a minimum of 70% on the subcourse examination.

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LESSON 1

PLATOON TACTICAL MOVEMENTS

OVERVIEW

LESSON DESCRIPTION: Platoon Tactical Movements.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Action: Identify the fundamentals and purpose of the offense, conduct movement techniques by a platoon, conduct the maneuver of a platoon, conduct the maneuver of a mechanized (M113) platoon, conduct a movement to contact by a platoon, and conduct an attack by a platoon.

Condition: Given the subcourse material contained in this lesson.

Standard: The student will demonstrate comprehension and knowledge of the material contained in this lesson by identifying the fundamentals and purpose of the offense, conducting movement techniques by a platoon, conducting the maneuver of a platoon, conducting maneuver of a mechanized (M113) and (BFV)platoon, conducting movement to contact by a platoon, conducting an attack by a platoon and completing the practice exercise at the end of this lesson.

References: The material in this lesson was derived from the following publications:

FM 7-7	1985
FM 7-7J	1993
FM 7-8	1992
FM 7-10	1990
FM 21-75	1984
FM 100-5	1993

INTRODUCTION

It is important for you, as a platoon leader, and other small unit leaders, to understand the fundamentals and purpose of the offense. The principle of the offense is one of the US Army's nine principles of war. Offensive action, or seizing and holding the initiative, is the most effective and decisive way for units to pursue and attain a clearly defined objective. This is fundamentally true in corps, division, company, or platoon operations. There will be times when it will be necessary for your unit to adopt a defensive posture. However, there must be an offensive spirit even in the conduct of defensive operations. In the defense, initiative means turning the tables on the attacker. Offensive action, whatever form it takes, is the means by which your unit can capture and hold the initiative, maintain freedom of action, and achieve results. Commanders can then capitalize on the initiative, impose their will on the enemy, select the place of confrontation or battle, exploit enemy weaknesses, and react to rapidly changing situations and unexpected developments. Regardless of the size of the unit, the side that acts first forces the enemy to react rather than to act.

Audacity or boldness has always been a feature of successful offensives. More attacks have been defeated because of lack of boldness than for any other reason. To the overly cautions around him, General George S. Patton, Jr., warned, "Never take counsel of your fears. The enemy is more worried

than you are. Numerical superiority, while useful, is not vital to successful offensive action. The fact that you are attacking induces the enemy to believe that you are stronger than he is".

PART A

FUNDAMENTALS AND PURPOSE OF THE OFFENSE

1. **General**. The offensive is the decisive form of war—the commander's ultimate means of imposing his will upon the enemy. While strategic, operational, or tactical considerations may require defending, defeat of an enemy force at any level will sooner or later require shifting to the offensive. As stated, even in the defense itself, seizure and retention of the initiative will require offensive operations. The more fluid the battle, the more true this will be.

2. **Purposes of the Offense**.

a. A platoon conducts offensive operations as part of a company or company team to—

(1) Defeat enemy forces.

(2) Secure key or decisive terrain.

(3) Deprive the enemy of resources.

(4) Gain information.

(5) Deceive and divert the enemy.

(6) Hold the enemy in position.

(7) Disrupt an enemy attack.

b. Because the attacker exposes himself by movement, offensive operations usually require him to achieve a local superiority in combat power at the point of the attack. That and the need to have sufficient force available to exploit a success imply accepting risk elsewhere. A successful attack must therefore be pressed relentlessly to prevent the opponent from recovering from the initial shock, regaining his balance, and either reconstituting a defense or conducting a counterattack.

c. While offensive operations may have as their objective the destruction or neutralization of an enemy force, inflicting physical damage is frequently incidental to offensive success. Rather, large gains are achieved by destroying the coherence of the defense, fragmenting and isolating enemy units in the zone of the attack, and driving deep to secure operationally decisive objectives. Historically, the most successful offensive operations have produced more enemy prisoners than casualties, reflecting the corrosive impact of offensive shock on the enemy's will to resist.

d. Such results are most likely from attacks which avoid the enemy's main strength, turn him out of his defensive position, isolate his forces from their sources of support, and force him to fight in an unintended direction over ground he has not prepared. Successful commanders have consistently attempted to produce such conditions, thereby shifting to the defender all the

disadvantages of fighting exposed and surprised. The attacker, however, has the initiative. He chooses the time and place to fight. Field Marshal Viscount Slim states this concisely.

"Hit the other fellow as quick as you can, as hard as you can, where it hurts him most, when he isn't looking."

e. Some times, of course, more direct attacks are required. Even MacArthur, a master of maneuver, was forced into frontal attacks to seize Buna and Gona in New Guinea. Frontal attacks are nearly always costly in lives and material, and should be made only when no other approach is possible or when nothing else will accomplish the mission.

f. While most attacks seek the outright defeat of the opposing force, offensive operations may also be conducted for related purposes. Attacks may be mounted to seize key terrain for use in defense or subsequent attack, or to secure or to protect vital lines of communication. The Israelis' capture of Mitla Pass in 1967, for example, allowed their subsequent drive to the Suez Canal. Attacks may also be conducted to secure critical war-supporting resources, such as in 1941 when Germany tried to seize Great Britain's oil fields in the near east.

3. **Characteristics of Offensive Operations**. Whatever their purpose, all successful offensive operations are characterized by surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity.

a. **Surprise**. Surprise is achieved by striking the enemy at a time or place, or in a manner, for which he is unprepared. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses his command and control, reduces the effectiveness of his weapons, and induces psychological shock in soldiers and leaders. Thus by radically diminishing enemy combat power, surprise enables the platoon to succeed with fewer forces than it might otherwise require.

(1) Achieving outright surprise once hostilities have begun has never been easy. Modern surveillance and warning capabilities have made it even more difficult. Surprise can still be achieved, however, by operating in a manner contrary to the enemy's expectations. For example, by attacking over a more difficult, less obvious, avenue of approach, or in adverse weather. Germany's precipitate defeat of France in May, 1940, for example, resulted in large measure from the surprise created by attacking through the "impassable" Ardennes Forest. Four years later, German armies surprised American forces by attacking in the dead of winter over the very same ground.

(2) Surprise can also be created by radically altering the structure or tempo of the battle. For example, inserting of airborne, airmobile forces or special operations forces deep in the enemy's rear can sharply and suddenly increase his sense of threat, frightening, confusing, or even paralyzing him. British and American airborne attacks conducted the night before the Normandy invasion had just such an effect on defending German forces. Deep operations, using ground forces to attack can achieve surprise by rapidly confronting rearward enemy forces with an unanticipated threat. The Israeli attack in the Sinai in June, 1967 illustrates this.

(3) Finally, surprise can also be achieved by manipulating the enemy's expectations through deception, feints, and demonstrations. Egypt's attack across the Suez Canal in

1973 owed its success in part to a succession of demonstrations and maneuvers conducted in the months before the attack—actions which led Israeli commanders to believe that preparations for the actual attack were merely part of the same pattern. More recently, British forces in the Falkland Islands used deception effectively to surprise Argentine forces defending Port Stanley.

(4) While surprise can radically degrade enemy combat power, the effect is usually only temporary, as the events of the Battle of the Bulge demonstrated. Unless enemy forces or their leaders are inherently fragile, they will sooner or later recover from the initial shock. History affords countless examples of armies, including our own, which have recovered from initial surprise to achieve final victory. To reap the benefits of surprise, therefore, the initial shock must be exploited ruthlessly, allowing the enemy no time to regain his balance.

(5) To sum up, surprise can be a vital ingredient to successful offensive operations, but can never be guaranteed and, rarely lasts. While always seeking surprise, therefore, you must also hedge against the loss of surprise and plan for the aggressive exploitation of surprise whenever it is achieved.

b. **Concentration**. While surprise may often contribute to offensive success, concentration of effort is essential to both achieving and exploiting it. Virtually all modern offensive operations have been characterized by sudden concentrations followed by rapid, deep exploitations. Germany's attack through France in 1940, the Soviet attack into Manchuria in 1945, MacArthur's counteroffensive in Korea in 1950, and Israel's seizure of the Sinai in 1967 all illustrate the rapid concentration of combat power to penetrate or envelop, then shatter the enemy's defenses. In all but the Manchurian case, the attacker enjoyed little overall numerical advantage. Rather, each succeeded by achieving overwhelming local superiority, then preserving that initial advantage by rapid and relentless exploitation.

(1) Modem technology has made the process of concentration both more difficult and more dangerous. While advances in ground and air mobility enable the platoon to concentrate more rapidly, they also enable the defender to react more quickly. Moreover, the lethality of modern weaponry—especially nuclear weapons—radically increases the threat to concentrated formations.

(2) To overcome these difficulties when attacking, the platoon leader must manipulate both his and the enemy's concentration. First, he uses dispersion to stretch the enemy's defenses and to avoid presenting lucrative targets for the enemy's deep fires. Then, he concentrates rapidly along converging axes to overwhelm enemy forces at the point of attack. Then, he disperses once again to exploit initial success and shatter the enemy's defenses in depth.

(3) Achieving this pattern of rapid concentration and dispersal requires flexible leaders, agile units, and careful synchronization of combat, combat support, and combat service support activities. Commanders at all levels must designate a main effort, focus resources to support it, and be prepared to shift it rapidly without losing synchronization

as the attack unfolds. Units making the main attack must be allocated enough combat support and combat service support to adjust to changing circumstances without time-consuming and potentially confusing reorganizations. At the same time, the platoon leader must retain control of sufficient assets to shift the main effort to a supporting attack if the latter appears more promising. The platoon leader will not shift the main effort.

(4) At every level, especially at division and higher, effort must be devoted to concealing concentration until it is too late for the enemy to react effectively. The leader must avoid or mask patterns of movement and preparatory activity which might reveal the direction or timing of attack. Logistical build-ups, patrolling activities, communications, and indirect fires must be monitored to preclude a visible change in the force's operating pattern. Speed, security, and deception are essential to successful concentration for attack.

(5) Concentration will require the careful prior coordination of other service support—especially air support. Tactical air operations will be vital at every stage of the attack—offensive and defensive counter air to protect the concentration from detection and attack, reconnaissance and interdiction to delay and disrupt enemy counterattacks, and close air support to weight the main effort and especially to sustain the momentum of the attack. The flexibility of air power makes it a powerful instrument of rapid concentration, but its full advantages cannot be realized unless ground and air operations are effectively synchronized.

c. **Tempo**. Tempo is the rate of speed of military action. Tempo is essential to success; it promotes surprise, keeps the enemy off-balance, contributes to the security of the attacking force, and prevents the defender from taking effective countermeasures. Properly exploited, tempo can confuse and immobilize the defender until the attack becomes unstoppable. Finally, speed can compensate for a lack of mass and provide the momentum necessary for attacks to achieve their objectives.

(1) Attacking forces move fast and follow reconnaissance units or successful probes through gaps in enemy defenses. They shift their strength quickly to widen penetrations, roll up exposed flanks, and reinforce successes. The attacker tries to carry the battle deep into the enemy rear to break down the enemy's defenses before he can react. The enemy must never be permitted to recover from the initial shock, to identify the main effort, and, above all, to mass his forces or supporting fire against the main offensive effort.

(2) Commanders build tempo into operations through careful planning. They identify the best avenues for attack, plan the battle in depth, provide for quick transitions to exploit initial successes, and concentrate and combine forces effectively. Speed depends on the violent execution of the plan by fire and movement units, but it will also depend on—

(a) Full understanding of the commander's intent.

(b) Availability and positioning of engineers.

(c) Use of air and ground cavalry.

(d) Maintenance of effective air defense.

(e) Responsive logistic support of the force.

(f) Effective use of military intelligence (MI) and electronic warfare (EW) assets.

(g) Effective command and control.

(h) Effective air support.

d. **Audacity**. Audacity is a key component of any successful offensive action. A simple plan, boldly executed, requires audacious leaders to offset numerical inferiority. Commanders should understand when and where they are taking risks, but must not become tentative in the execution of their plan. A difficult situation handled boldly often leads to dramatic success. The offensive is inherently a bold action and must be pursued with audacity.

4. **Forms of the Tactical Offense**. The four general forms of the tactical offense are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. While it is convenient to talk of them as different forms, in reality they flow readily from one to another. Operations are increasingly fluid. Different forms of attacks—occurring throughout the depth of the battlefield simultaneously and in closely aligned phases that shift back and forth—take new forms and offer increasing options for development. An attack may lead to exploitation, which can lead to pursuit. But there are also occasions when a pursuit can be followed by a deliberate attack, or when a deliberate attack can lead directly to a pursuit. The ebb and flow of battle opens up many avenues for attack; victory goes to the bold.

a. **Movement to Contact**. Movement to contact is the offensive operation conducted to develop the situation and establish or regain contact. It may also include preliminary diversionary actions and preparatory fires. The extent and nature of the movement to contact depends on whether opposing forces were previously in contact. If forces are not in contact, then the central feature of the movement-to-contact operations is gaining or reestablishing contact with the enemy. Establishing contact occurs at some level in virtually all offensive operations where forces are not in immediate proximity to one another. Knowing the enemy's location and activities is an underpinning of a unit's ability to conduct mobile, force-oriented battles. Technologies such as space-based or joint-extended range surveillance and reconnaissance systems help locate the enemy, but physical contact by friendly troops remains a vital means of finding and fixing enemy forces. It is best when friendly forces discover the enemy with enough time remaining to make hasty attack plans. Being surprised by inadvertently running into the enemy is always a possibility—but not the preferred tactical option.

(1) **Approach March**. An approach march is a variant of the movement to contact. Commanders conduct an approach march when they are relatively certain of the enemy's location and are a considerable distance from the enemy. Commanders adjust their

tempo appropriately as they anticipate closing with enemy forces. They decide where their force can deploy into attack formations that facilitate the initial contact and still provide freedom of action for the bulk of their force. Two limited-purpose applications of the movement to contact are the search and attack, and the reconnaissance in force.

(a) **Search and Attack**. Search and attack operations are conducted by smaller, light maneuver units and air cavalry or air assault units in larger areas. The purpose of these operations are to destroy enemy forces, protect the force, deny area to the enemy, or collect information. Commanders use search and attack when the enemy disperses in an area of close terrain unsuited to heavy forces, when they cannot find enemy weaknesses, or when they want to deny the enemy movement in an area. They also employ search and attack in rear areas against infiltrators or SOF. Search and attack is also useful as an area security mission to clear assigned zones.

(b) **Reconnaissance in Force**. The reconnaissance in force is a limited-objective operation by a considerable force to obtain information and locate and test enemy disposition, strengths, and reactions. If the enemy situation must be developed along a broad front, the reconnaissance in force may consist of strong probing actions to determine the enemy situation at selected points. The enemy's reactions may reveal weaknesses in his defensive system. Commanders may conduct a reconnaissance in force during mobile operations, keeping pressure on the defender by seizing key terrain and uncovering his weaknesses. Even when the commander executes a reconnaissance in force primarily to gather information, he must be alert to seize any opportunity to exploit tactical success.

(2) **Meeting Engagement**. The desired result of contact is to find the enemy. When this happens, commanders fight a meeting engagement. To maintain their freedom of action once they make contact (essential to maintaining the initiative), commanders usually lead with a force that locates and fixes the enemy.

(a) The commander holds most of his force back so that when his lead force makes contact, he can maneuver the majority of his force without becoming decisively engaged. Sometimes a meeting engagement occurs by chance wherever the opposing forces meet. This is not a preferred operation or one that intelligence assets should allow to happen. Rather, commanders seek to surprise the enemy.

(b) Sometimes in a race to an objective or occupation of key terrain, forces make contact while on the move. Moreover, meeting engagements can occur even when each opponent is aware of the other, but both decide to attack without delay. Once commanders establish contact, they implement the option that provides them the most advantage. Hasty attacks usually follow movement-to-contact operations, but other options are possible. Among these are fixing the enemy force while most of the attacking force bypasses it or switching to a

deliberate attack. When Army forces run into a larger enemy, or if the terrain is such that it offers an advantage, commanders may elect to conduct a hasty defense and force the enemy to fight in the open. Commanders exploit every opportunity. Whatever the choice attack or defend—when combat forces collide commanders must generate and sustain overwhelming combat power.

b. **Attack**. The purpose of the attack is to defeat, destroy, or neutralize the enemy. The same fundamentals apply to each type of attack. The differences between the types of attack lie in the amount of planning, coordination, resources, and preparation before execution—in other words, how thoroughly commanders can apply the fundamentals. Force-oriented objectives allow greater freedom of action than terrain-oriented objectives, so force-oriented objectives are preferred. The attack usually follows a movement to contact, but it is also appropriate after a defensive operation, exploitation, or pursuit. Deciding when to begin and end an attack is a tactical or operational judgment based upon the commander's objectives.

(1) **Hasty Attack**. The hasty attack is the most likely result of the meeting engagement. Commanders launch the hasty attack with the forces at hand and with minimum preparation. To destroy the enemy before he is able either to concentrate or to establish a defense. In the defense, hasty counterattacks may recapture lost positions before the enemy has time to consolidate his success. Regardless of its purpose or echelon, a hasty attack enhances agility, though at a risk of losing synchronization. To minimize this risk, units conducting hasty attacks should use standard formations and well understood and rehearsed plans supported by sound intelligence preparation of the battlefield.

(2) **Deliberate Attack**. In contrast to hasty attack, deliberate attacks are fully synchronized operations that employ the effects of every available asset against the enemy defense. They are often conducted from a defensive posture. Because such synchronization requires careful planning and extensive coordination, deliberate attacks take time to prepare. Commanders should use the deliberate attack when the enemy situation is known and when the combined arms team can be employed with sufficient combat power to defeat the enemy.

(3) **Spoiling Attack**. Commanders mount a spoiling attack from a defensive posture to disrupt an expected enemy attack. A spoiling attack attempts to strike the enemy while he is most vulnerable during his preparations for attack in assembly areas and attack positions—or while he is on the move, before he crosses his line of departure. In most aspects, commanders conduct spoiling attacks like any other attack. They may be either hasty (when time is short) or deliberate (when the command has obtained adequate forewarning).

(4) **Counterattack**. Commanders conduct a counterattack either with a reserve or with lightly committed forward elements. They counterattack after the enemy launches his attack, reveals his main effort, or creates an assailable flank. Although commanders conduct a counterattack much like any other attack, synchronizing it within the overall defensive effort requires careful timing. Counterattacks are most useful when they are

anticipated, planned, and executed in coordination with other defending, delaying, or attacking forces and in conjunction with the higher commander's plan.

(5) **Raid**. A raid is a limited-objective attack into enemy territory for a specific purpose other than gaining and holding ground. Commanders conduct raids to destroy key enemy installations and facilities, to capture or free prisoners, or to disrupt enemy command and control or support functions.

(6) **Feint and Demonstration**. Diversionary operations include feint and demonstrations. A feint is designed to divert the enemy's attention from the main effort. Brigades and smaller units conduct feints. A feint is usually a shallow, limited-objective attack conducted before or during the main attack. A demonstration is a show of force in an area where no decision is sought. A demonstration threatens attack but no contact is made. Feints and demonstrations deceive the enemy as to the true intention of the attacker. If they reveal enemy weaknesses, the commander follows up with a hasty or deliberate attack.

c. **Exploitation.** In an exploitation, the attacker extends the destruction of the defending force by maintaining offensive pressure. Attacks that annihilate a defending enemy are rare. More often, the enemy tries to disengage, withdraw, and reconstitute an effective defense as rapidly as possible. In large-scale operations, the enemy tries to draw forces from less active areas or bring forward previously uncommitted reserves. Opportunities for local exploitation may occur even as the attack continues elsewhere in the same battle space. The ultimate objective of the exploitation is to disintegrate the enemy to the point that he has no alternative but to surrender or fight. The forces already leading the attack should continue directly into the exploitation. Commanders normally designate exploiting forces by issuing fragmentary orders during the attack. Commanders of the exploiting force are given the most possible freedom of action to accomplish their mission. They act with aggressiveness, initiative, and boldness. Their objectives are critical communications centers, key terrain (whose possession would significantly contribute to destruction of organized enemy resistance), or simply a point of orientation. Commanders of all units in exploitation must anticipate the transition to pursuit and must consider any new course of action that becomes available as enemy cohesion and resistance break down.

d. **Pursuit**. A pursuit is an offensive operation against a retreating enemy force. It follows a successful attack or exploitation and is ordered when the enemy cannot conduct an organized defense and attempts to disengage. The object of the pursuit is to destroy the opposing force. If it becomes apparent that enemy resistance has broken down entirely and the enemy is fleeing the battlefield, any type of offensive operation can give way to pursuit. Commanders conduct air and ground operations to intercept, capture, or destroy the enemy. Air forces can also interdict fleeing forces. Like exploitation, pursuit encompasses broad decentralization of control and rapid movement.

(1) Exploitation and pursuit test the audacity and endurance of soldiers and leaders alike. Both operations risk disorganizing the attacker nearly as much as the defender.

Extraordinary physical and mental effort is necessary to sustain momentum, transition to other operations, and to translate a tactical success into operational or strategic victory.

(2) Pursuit, like other operations, can give way to other forms of the offense. Pursuit occurs infrequently and exploitation usually ends short of annihilation, curtailed either by insufficient sustaining capability or by deliberate strategic restriction. Whenever possible, however, commanders use pursuit to overwhelm and shatter the enemy, making further resistance impossible.

5. **Conclusion**. The fundamentals and purpose of offensive operations are well defined and established. This is equally true for the US Army doctrine on how to apply the principles of offensive operations. However, the most essential element of combat power is skilled and confident leadership. Leadership provides purpose, direction, and motivation in combat. You, as a leader, will determine the degree to which maneuver, firepower, and protection are used, if these elements are effectively balanced, and decide how to bring them to bear against the enemy. There are no fixed solutions to govern this process. Only excellence in the art and science of war will enable leaders to generate and apply combat power successfully. Once the battle begins, superior combat power derives from the courage and competence of soldiers, the excellence of their training, the capability of their equipment, the soundness of their combined arms doctrine, and, above all, the quality of their leadership.

PART B

MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

1. **General**. Movement refers to the shifting of forces on the battlefield. The key to moving successfully involves selecting the best combination of route, formation, and movement techniques for each situation. Leaders consider the factors of mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time available (METT-T). The leader's selection must allow moving squads to maintain cohesion, maintain momentum, provide maximum protection, and make contact in a manner that allows them to transition smoothly to an offensive or defensive action.

2. **Formation**. Formations are arrangements of units and of soldiers in relation to each other. Platoons and squads use formations for control, security, and flexibility.

a. Reasons for using formations—

(1) **Control**. Every squad and soldier has a standard position. Soldiers can see their team leader. Fire team leaders can see their squad leaders. Leaders control their units using arm-and-hand signals. Radios are used only when needed.

(2) **Security**. Formations also provide 360 degrees security and allow units to give the weight of their firepower to the flanks or front in anticipation of enemy contact.

(3) **Flexibility**. Formations do not demand parade ground precision. Platoons and squads must retain the flexibility needed to vary their formations depending on the situation. The use of formations allows soldiers to execute battle drills more quickly and gives them the assurance that their leaders and buddy team members are in their expected positions and performing the right tasks.

b. When a platoon is given a mission that requires movement, you must decide which formation to use based on the terrain and enemy disposition. A movement formation is the arrangement of fire team and squads during movement.

c. **Fire Team Formations**.

(1) **Wedge**. The wedge is the basic formation of the fire team. Leaders are up front in this formation to allow the team leader to lead by example, "Follow me, and do as I do." The interval between soldiers in the wedge formation is approximately 10 meters. The wedge expands and contracts, depending on the terrain. When rough terrain, poor visibility, or other factors make control of the wedge difficult, the fire teams modify the wedge. The normal interval is reduced so that team members can see their team leader and the team leaders can see their squad leader. The sides of the wedge can contract to the point where the wedge resembles a single file. When moving in less rugged terrain, where control is easier, soldiers expand or resume their original intervals.

(2) **File**. When the terrain precludes use of the wedge, fire teams use the file formation.

d. **Squad Formations**. Squad formations describe the relationships between fire teams in the squad. They include the squad column, squad line, and squad file.

(1) **Squad Column**. The squad column is the squad's most common formation. It provides good dispersion laterally and in depth without sacrificing control, and it facilitates maneuver. The lead fire team is the base fire team. When the squad moves independently or as the rear element of the platoon, the rifleman in the trail fire team provides rear security, Figure 1-1.

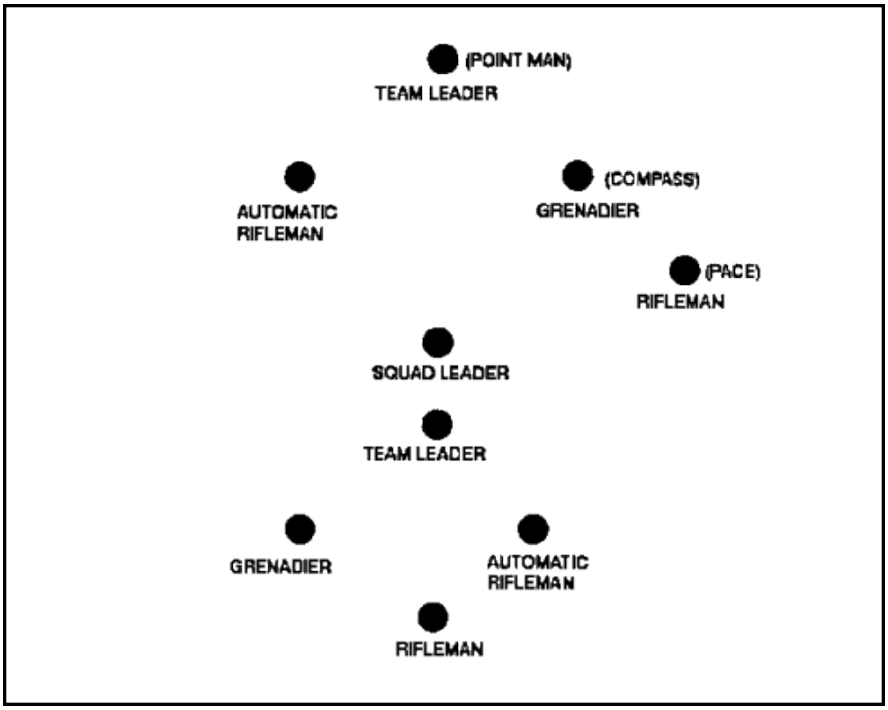


Figure 1-1. Squad column with fire teams in column

(2) **Squad Line**. The squad line provides maximum firepower to the front. When a squad is acting as the base squad, the fire team on the right is the base fire team, Figure 1-2.

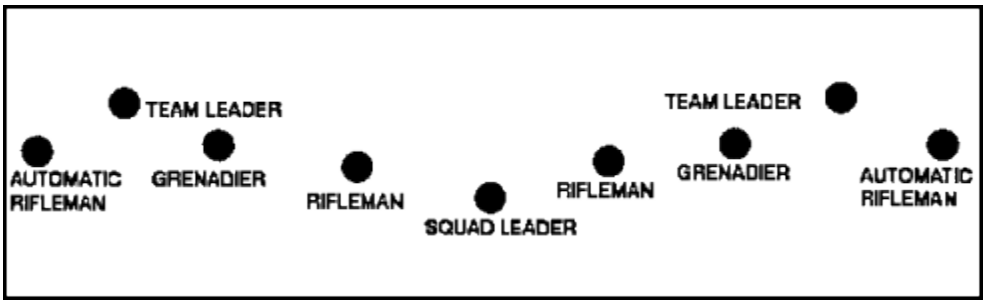


Figure 1-2. Squad line

(3) **Squad File**. When not traveling in a column or line, squads travel in file. The squad file has the same characteristics as the fire team file. If the squad leader desires to increase his control over the formation, he exerts greater morale presence by leading from the front, and by being immediately available to make decisions. He will move forward to the first or second position. Additional control over the rear of the formation can be provided by moving a team leader to the last position, Figure 1-3.

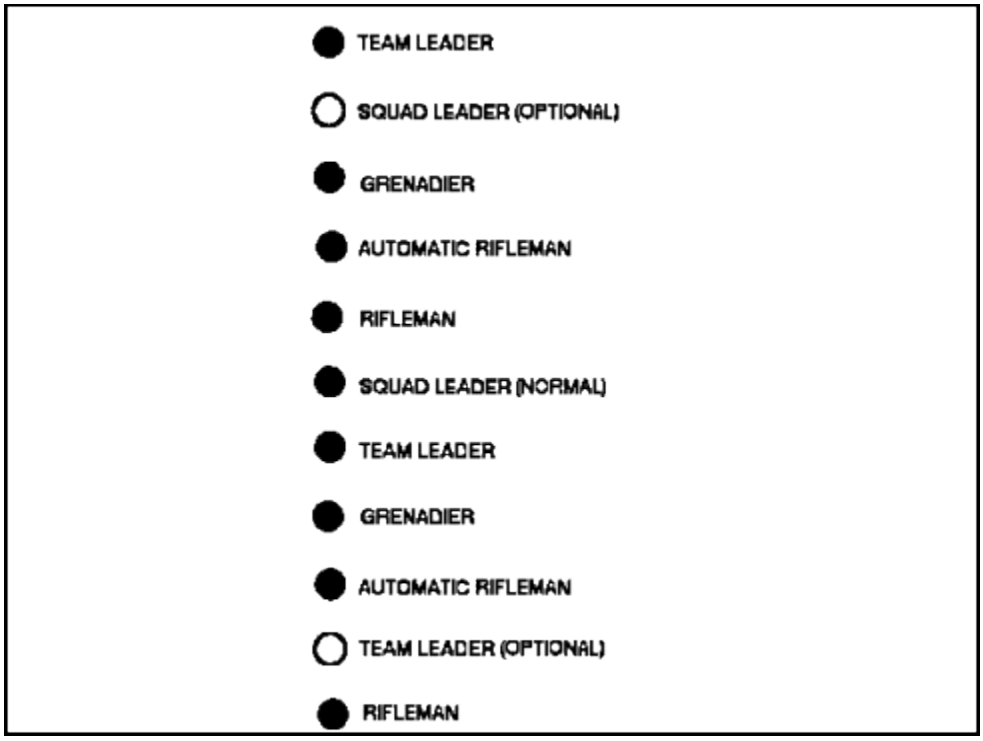


Figure 1-3. Squad file

e. **Platoon Formations.** The platoon formations include the platoon column, the platoon line (squads on line or column), the platoon vee, the platoon wedge, and the platoon file. The leader should weigh these carefully to select the best formation based on the mission and on METT-T analysis.

(1) **Platoon Column**. This formation is the platoon's primary movement formation. It provides good dispersion, both laterally and in depth, and simplifies control. The lead squad is the base squad. The location of crew served weapons are determined by using METT-T and normally move with the platoon leader so he can quickly establish a base of fire, Figure 1-4.

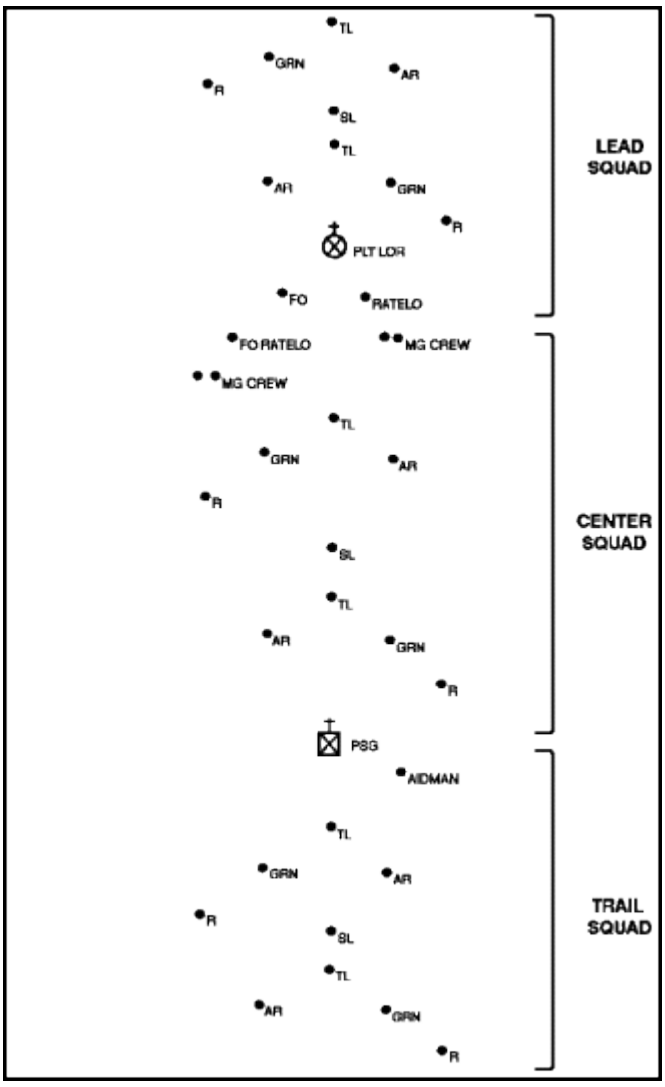


Figure 1-4. Platoon column

(2) **Platoon Line, Squad on Line**. This formation allows the delivery of maximum fire to the front and very little to the flanks. This formation is hard to control, and it does not lend itself well to rapid movement. When two or more platoons are attacking, the company commander chooses one of them as the base platoon. The base platoon's center squad is the base squad. When the platoon is not acting as the base platoon, its base squad is the flank squad nearest the base platoon. The machine guns can move with the platoon, or they can support by fire from a support position. This is the basic platoon assault formation. The squad leader positions himself where he can best control the squad, Figure 1-5.

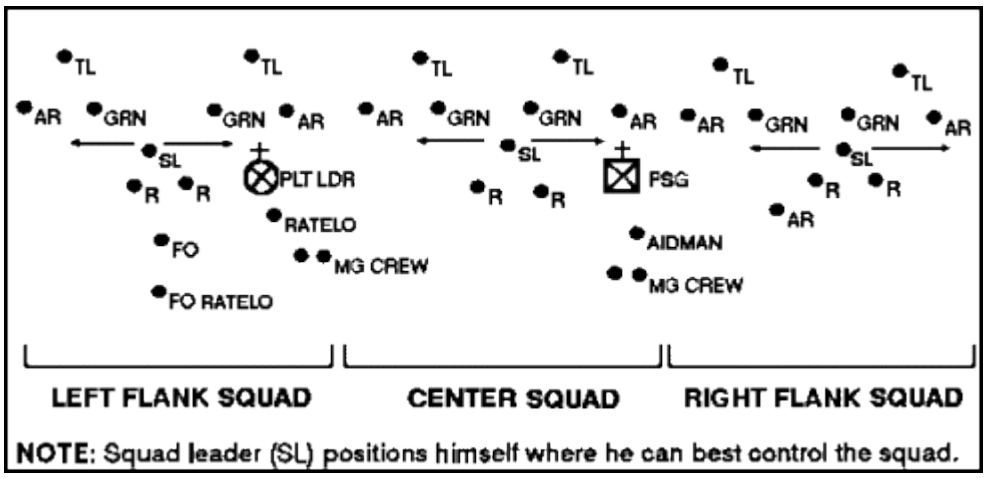


Figure 1-5. Platoon line, squad on line

(3) **Platoon Line, Squads in Column**. The platoon leader can use this formation when he does not want to deploy all personnel on line, and when he wants the squad to react to unexpected contact. This formation is easier to control, and it lends itself better to rapid movement than the platoon line, or squads on line formation. However, it is harder to control than and does not facilitate rapid movement as well as a column. When two or more platoons are moving, the company commander chooses one of them as the base platoon. When the platoon is not the base platoon, its base squad is its flank squad nearest the base platoon, Figure 1-6.

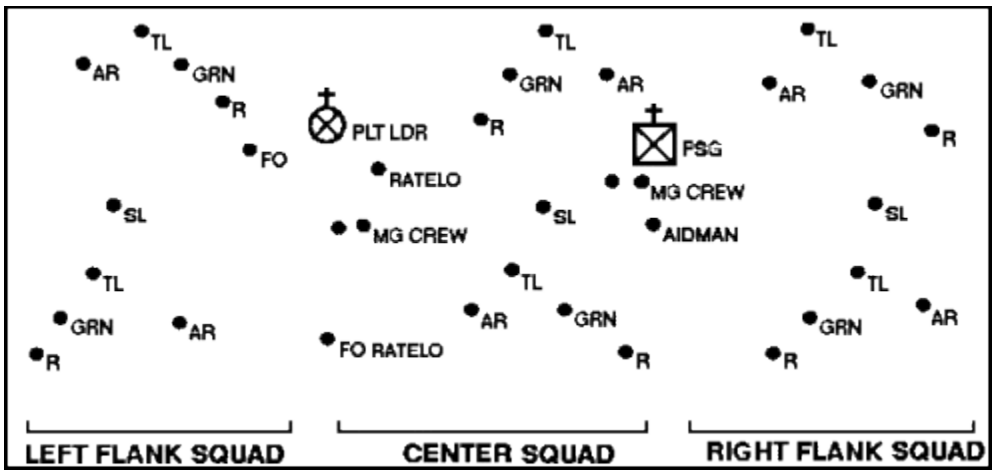


Figure 1-6. Platoon line, squads in column

(4) **Platoon Vee**. This formation has two squads up front to provide a heavy volume of fire on contact. It also has one squad in the rear that can either overwatch or trail the other squads. This formation is hard to control; movement is slow. The platoon leader designates one of the front squads to be the platoon's base squad, Figure 1-7.

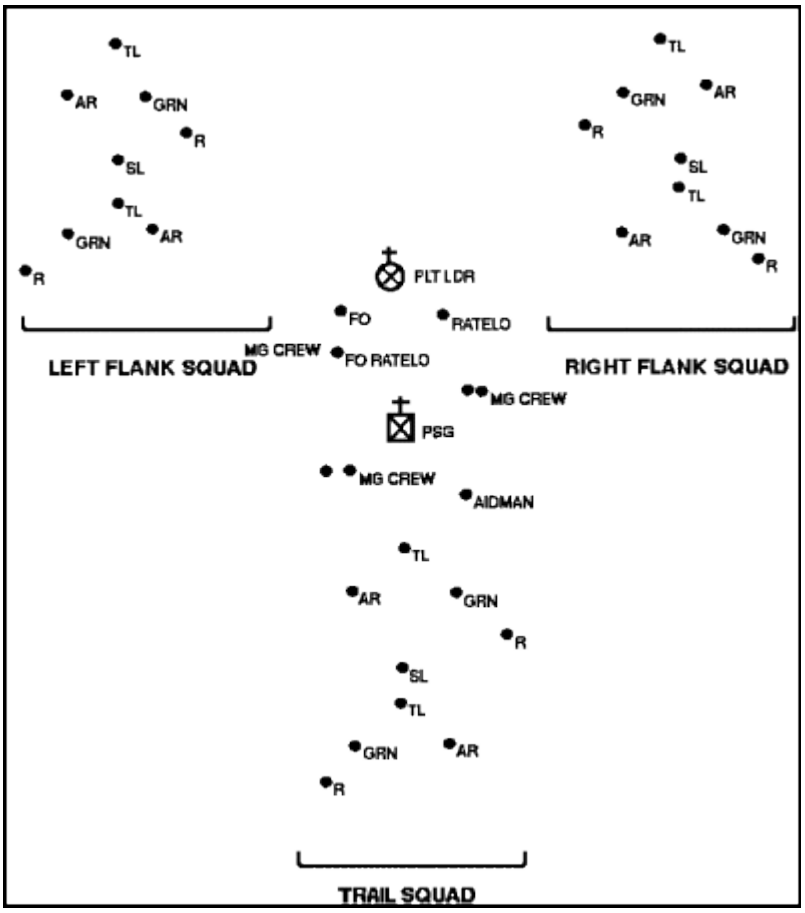


Figure 1-7. Platoon vee

(5) **Platoon Wedge**. This formation has two squads in the rear that can overwatch or trail the lead squad. It provides a large volume of fire to the front or flank. It allows the platoon leader to make contact with a squad and still have one or two squads to maneuver. The lead squad is the base squad, Figure 1-8.

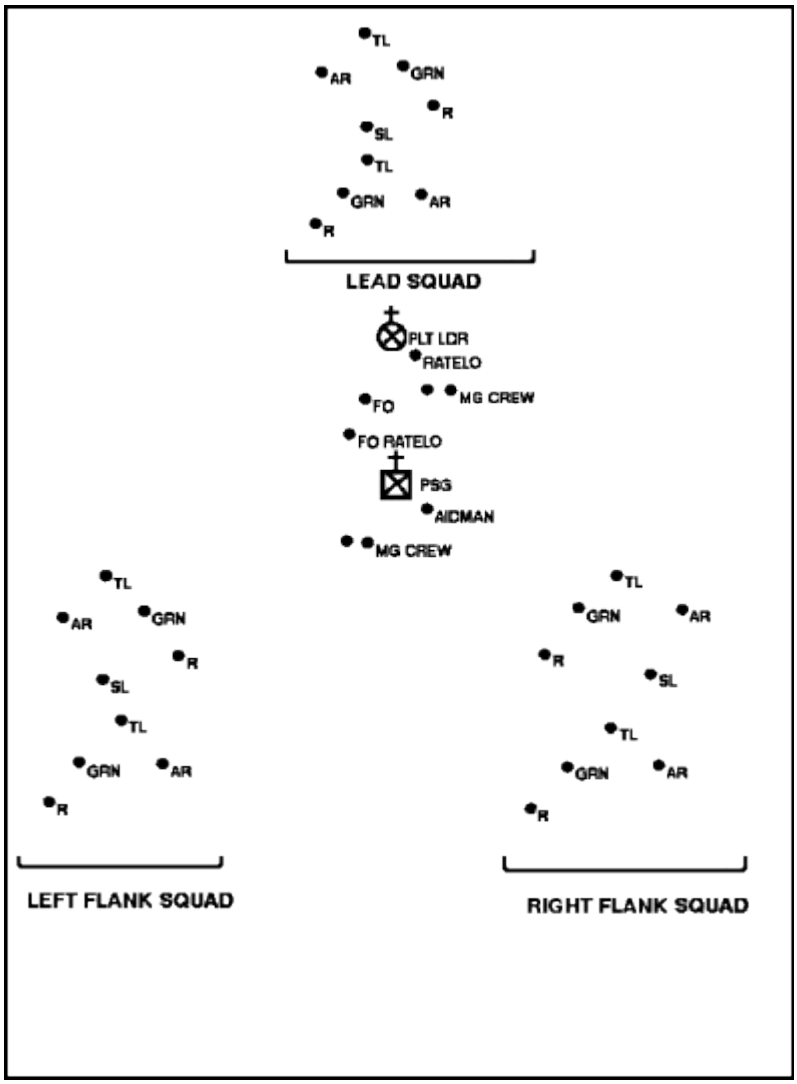


Figure 1-8. Platoon wedge

(6) **Platoon File**. This formation may be set up in several methods. One method is to have three squads files follow one another using one of the movement techniques. Another method is to have a single platoon file with a front security element (point) and a flank security element. This formation is used when the visibility is poor due to terrain, vegetation, or light conditions. The distance between soldiers is less than normal to allow communication by passing messages up and down the file. The platoon file has the same characteristics as the fire team and squad files, Figure 1-9.

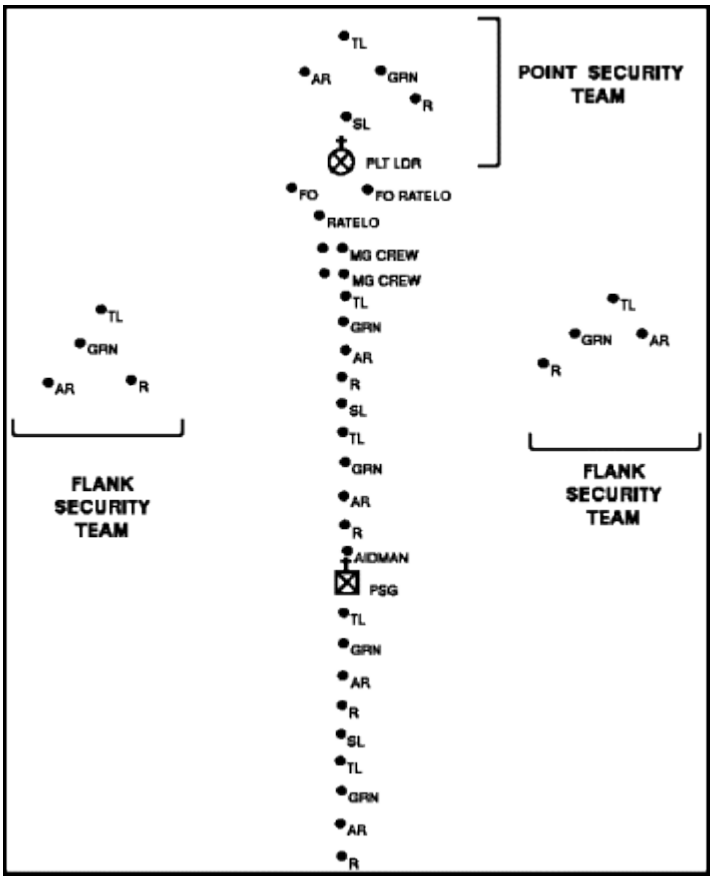


Figure 1-9. Platoon file

3. **Movement Techniques**. A movement technique is the manner a platoon uses to traverse terrain. There are three movement techniques: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. Like formations, movement techniques provide varying degrees of control, security, and flexibility. Movement techniques differ from formations in two ways. First, formations are relatively fixed; movement techniques are not. The distance between moving units or the distance that a squad bounds away from an overwatching squad varies based on factors of METT-T. Second, formations allow the platoon to weight its maximum firepower in a desired direction; movement techniques allow squads to make contact with the enemy with the smallest element possible. This allows leaders to establish a base of fire, initiate suppressive fires, and attempt to maneuver without first having to disengage or be reinforced. In planning tactical movement, leaders should also consider the requirements for reconnaissance, dispersion, security, cover and concealment, speed, observation and fields of fire, maneuver space, and command and control.

a. The movement techniques a platoon will use are based on the likelihood of enemy contact and the need for speed. Factors the leader considers for each technique are control, dispersion, speed, and security. Movement techniques are not fixed formations. The distances between soldiers, teams, and squads are based on mission, enemy, terrain, visibility, and other factors that affects control. Soldiers must be able to see their fire team leader. The squad leader must be able to see the fire team leader. The platoon leader should be able to see his lead squad leader. Leaders control movement with arm-and-hand signals. Radios are used only when needed.

MOVEMENT TECHNIQUE	ENEMY CONTACT	CONTROL	DISPERSION	SPEED	SECURITY
TRAVELING	NOT LIKELY	MORE	LESS	FASTEST	LEAST
TRAVELING OVERWATCH	POSSIBLE	LESS	MORE	SLOWER	MORE
BOUNDING OVERWATCH	EXPECTED	MOST	MOST	SLOWEST	MOST

(1) **Platoon Traveling**. Traveling is used when enemy contact is not likely and the unit wants speed. The platoon moves with squads in column, with about 20 meters between squads, if the terrain and visibility permit (Figure 1-10). Each squad uses the traveling technique. The platoon leader normally travel between the first and second squads in the order of movement. The platoon sergeant travels at the head of the trailing squad to help control trailing squads and weapons. The platoon headquarters move close to the platoon leader.

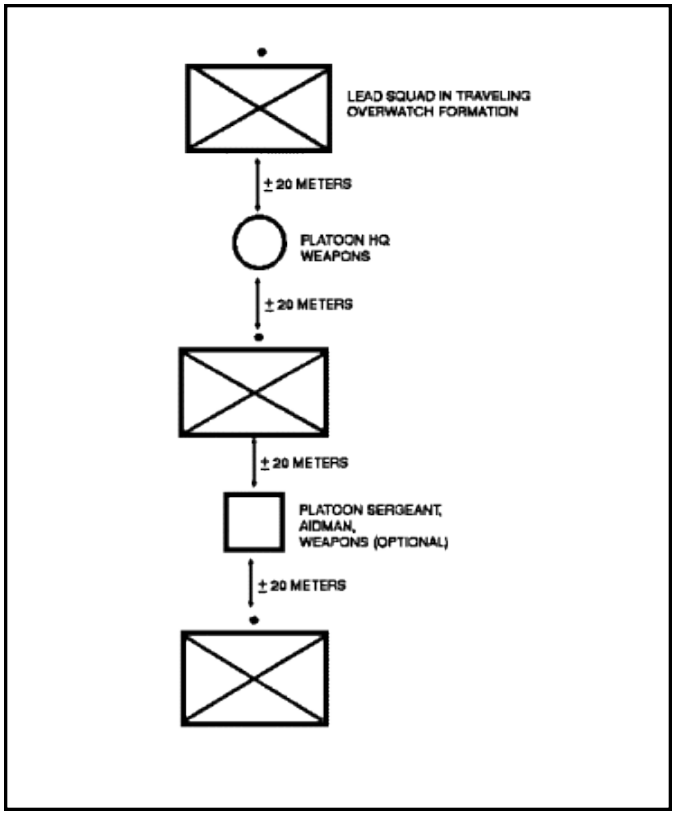


Figure 1-10. Platoon traveling

(2) **Platoon Traveling Overwatch**. Traveling overwatch should be used when contact is possible but speed is necessary. The platoon moves as in traveling, except with more distance between the lead squad and the squad that follows it. The trailing squads will then have more room to maneuver and help the lead squad if it makes contact. Distances between the lead squad and the rest of the platoon must be short enough to allow visual contact, yet far enough that the trailing squads will not be hit by enemy fire directed at the lead squad, (Figure 1-11). If terrain and visibility permit, you should try to keep 100 meters between the lead squad and the next trailing squad. The platoon leader normally positions himself at the head of the trailing squads for control and observation. The platoon sergeant normally travels with the last squad. The lead squad uses traveling overwatch and the trailing squads use traveling.

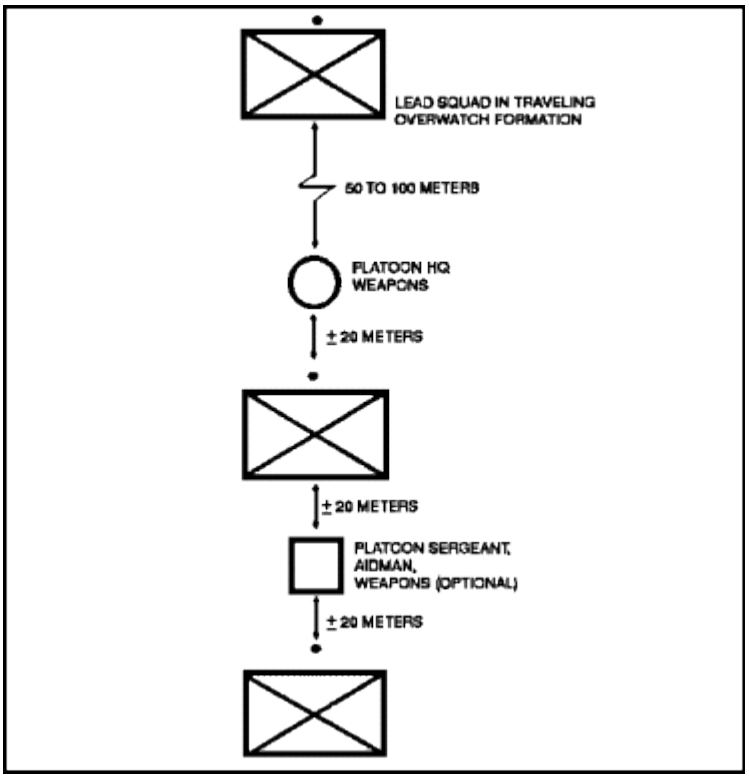


Figure 1-11. Platoon traveling overwatch

(3) **Platoon Bounding Overwatch**. Bounding overwatch should be used when contact is expected. Each squad has a job, which changes with each bound, Figure 1-12.

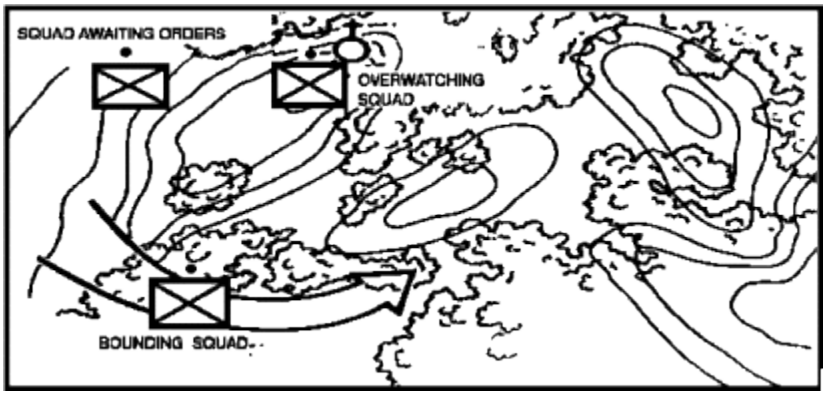


Figure 1-12. Bounding overwatch

(4) **One squad bounding**. One of the squads bounds forward to a place where it becomes the overwatch element, unless contact is made enroute. This is the squad which should find the enemy and the one you want to make contact through. The length of a bound is determined by terrain, visibility, the range of the over-watching weapons, and the ability of the platoon leader to control the squads. The bounding squad may use either squad traveling overwatch or bounding overwatch. This depends on the time available to complete the bound and the terrain they must move through.

(5) **One squad overwatching**. While one squad is bounding, one squad overwatches the bounding squad from a covered position from which it can see and shoot at likely enemy positions. The overwatching squad should be prepared to fire at once when the bounding squad makes contact. The platoon leader normally stays with the overwatching squad and positions the machine guns and Dragons, if assigned, to support the bounding squad.

(6) **One squad waiting for orders**. Ideally, one squad is uncommitted and ready for employment as directed. The platoon sergeant and the leader of the squad awaiting orders normally position themselves close to the platoon leader position with the overwatching squad. If contact is made, these leaders can receive orders quickly and look at the terrain. When deciding where to have the bounding squad go, the platoon leader must consider—

(a) Where the enemy is likely to be.

(b) The requirements of the mission.

(c) The routes to the next overwatch position.

(d) The ability of an overwatching unit's weapons to cover the bound.

(e) Responsiveness of the rest of the platoon.

(f) The fields of fire at the next overwatch position.

b. A squad should bound no more than 200 meters so that all weapons with the overwatching squad can provide support. The forward observer (FO) stays with the overwatching squad, ready to call for fire. There are different ways to bound, or the platoon leader can have the squad awaiting orders move to an overwatch position. In close terrain, where there are no good overwatch positions, he may have the lead squad use squad bounding overwatch with the trailing squads traveling or in traveling overwatch. He may attach a machine gun to the lead squad for more firepower and then have it set up overwatch at the first good place. Before a bound, the platoon leader must give instructions to the squad leaders, (Figure 1-13). This is done from the overwatch position, telling and showing them—

(1) The direction or location of the enemy if known.

(2) The positions of the overwatching squad.

(3) The next overwatch position.

(4) The route of the bounding squad.

(5) What to do after the bounding squad reaches the next position.

(6) How they will get their next orders.

(7) What signal the bounding squad will use to announce it is prepared to overwatch.

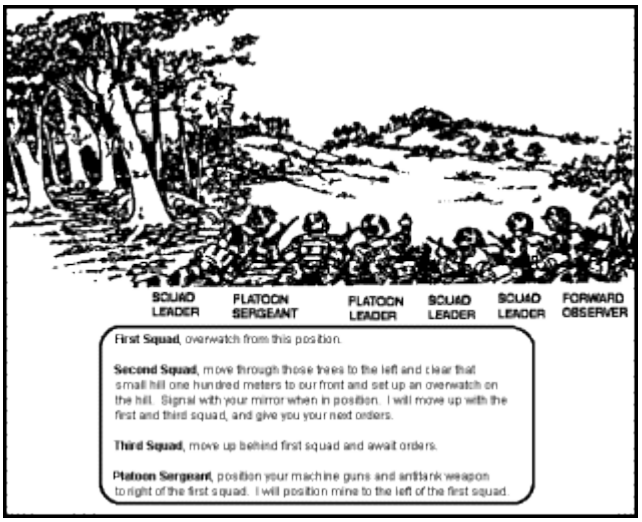


Figure 1-13. Platoon leader's order for bounding overwatch

4. **Security.**

a. Security includes any measure taken by platoons and squads against actions that may reduce their effectiveness. Security involves avoiding detection by the enemy and deceiving the enemy about friendly positions and intentions. It also includes finding the enemy and knowing as much about his positions and intentions as possible. The requirement for security is an inherent part of all platoon operations. Platoons and squads secure themselves when they move, attack, and defend. As part of a larger formation, platoons undertake security operations that involve establishing perimeter defense, patrolling, establishing squad-size observation posts (OP's), or

they may execute advance, flank, or rear guard missions for the main body in a movement to contact.

b. Platoons and squads enhance security during movement by—

(1) Using the proper formation and technique.

(2) Moving as fast as the situation will allow. This may degrade the enemy's ability to detect the platoon or squad and the effectiveness of his fires, once detected.

(3) Moving along terrain that offers cover and concealment.

(4) Enforcing noise and light discipline.

(5) Using proper camouflage techniques.

5. **Movement When Visibility is Limited**.

a. At night or when visibility is poor, a platoon must be able to function the same as during the day. It must be able to control, navigate, maintain security, move, and stalk, at night or during limited visibility.

b. **Control**. When visibility is poor, the following methods aid in control—

(1) Selected personnel use night vision devices.

(2) Leaders move closer to the front.

(3) The platoon reduces speed.

(4) Each soldier uses two small stripes of luminous tape on his helmet to allow the soldier behind him to see.

(5) Leaders reduce the interval between soldiers and between units to make sure they can see each other.

(6) Leaders conduct headcount at regular intervals and after each halt to ensure personnel accountability.

c. **Navigation**. To assist in navigation during limited visibility, leaders use—

(1) Terrain association (general direction of travel coupled with recognition of prominent map and ground features).

(2) Dead reckoning (compass direction and specific distances or legs). At the end of each leg, leaders should verify their location.

(3) Movement routes that parallel identifiable terrain features.

(4) Guides or marked routes.

(5) GSRs to vector units to the proper location.

(6) Position location devices.

d. **Security**. For stealth and security in night moves, squads and platoons—

(1) Designate a point man to maintain alertness, the lead team leader to navigate, and a pace man to count the distance traveled. Alternate compass and pace man are designated.

(2) Allow no smoking, lights, or noise.

(3) Observe radio listening silence.

(4) Camouflage soldiers and equipment.

(5) Use terrain to avoid detection by enemy surveillance or night vision devices.

(6) Make frequent listening halts.

(7) Mask the sounds of movement with artillery fires.

e. **Night Walking**. Proficiency in night movement is gained through practice. A soldier walking at night must keep his head up, move very slowly, taking 6 inch steps, pointing his toes downward, and avoiding twigs and trip wires.

f. **Stalking**. Soldiers stalk to get close as they can to an enemy sentry, patrol, or base camp. The soldier moves in a slow crouching night walk watching the enemy continuously and taking advantage of gusts of wind, vehicle movement, loud talking, and nearby weapons fire to mask his movement.

6. **Moving as Part of a Company.**

a. The platoon moves most of the time as part of its company. The lead platoon uses the movement technique that suits the likelihood of contact. The lead platoon must protect the company from the front, prevent delay, and clear the route. It reacts with fire and movement if contact is made.

b. When not in the lead, the platoon will use traveling or traveling overwatch. It must be ready to support the lead platoon if contact is made.

c. The company commander may have a platoon send a squad to reconnoiter a danger area, or to secure one of the company's flanks.

7. **Moving with Tanks**.

a. When the infantry platoon moves with tanks, the platoon leader must modify the movement techniques used to take advantage of the mobility, firepower, and shock action of the tanks. If the platoon is moving through open terrain, the tanks may lead to exploit their shock action. If the platoon is in heavily wooded terrain or in towns, the infantry platoon will usually lead, while tanks move from one overwatch position to the next. The infantry platoon will clear obstacles and kill enemy infantry and antitank weapon crews. Continuous and close coordination between infantry platoon leaders and tank platoon leaders is needed to make sure that the best movement technique is used to avoid fratricide from tank fire and movement. Tank crews must know where the riflemen are, particularly when they are leading the tanks. Tanks

and infantry communicate with each other by radio, flares, colored smoke grenades, and the tanks' external phones.

b. Narrow passes or defiles are danger areas for tanks. The infantry platoon secures the flanks of the defiles using bounding overwatch. The platoon looks for mines, RPGs, Saggers, and enemy tanks. Tanks are positioned and ready to shoot at once to support infantry squads that make contact.

c. When tanks and infantry must advance quickly and when enemy contact is not likely, infantry may ride on the tanks' decks. Men on tanks, however, are vulnerable to all types of fire. When the infantry ride on tanks, they reduce the tanks maneuverability and firepower. The infantry must dismount as soon as they come under fire, or to clear danger areas.

d. When mounting a tank, troops must always get permission from the tank commander, then mount from the tank's right front, not its left side where the coaxial machine gun is. Once mounted, they move to the rear deck, stand, and hold onto the bustle rack.

e. If there is not enough room for everyone on the back deck, some may stand beside the turret and hold onto the hatches and hatch openings.

f. Everyone must be alert for obstacles which may cause the tank to turn suddenly, trees which may knock men off the tank, and targets which may cause the tank to traverse its turret quickly and fire.

g. Riding on tanks is always hazardous and should only be done when the risks of riding are outweighed by the advantages.

8. **Conclusion**. This concludes the discussion on infantry platoon movement formations. During this portion of the subcourse, we discussed the importance of careful movement on the battle field; the fundamentals of movement that platoons and squads apply; the fact that units move to gain and keep the initiative; traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch movement techniques; how leaders position themselves to control their units during movement; and some of the factors for moving during limited visibility and with tanks.

PART C

MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

1. **General**. Most offensive operations begin with a movement to contact. Movement to contact is part of the preparatory phase of offensive operations. The preparatory phase of an offensive operation includes the concentration of attacking forces and required support forces and their movement into contact with the enemy. Whenever a platoon is moving toward the enemy but is not in contact, it is conducting a movement to contact. Its purpose is to gain or maintain contact with the enemy and to develop the situation to conduct either a hasty or deliberate attack. While normally associated with mobile operations in which both sides are attempting to gain the initiative, movement to contact occurs at some level in almost all attacks where forces are not close to each other. Movement to contact is usually characterized by a lack of information about the enemy, rapid movement along multiple axis of

advance, decentralized control, and rapid deployment of combined arms formations from the march to attack or defend.

a. This portion of the subcourse will cover a platoon operating as the lead element of its company. A platoon normally conducts a movement to contact as part of its company. Seldom will a platoon be tasked to conduct a movement to contact by itself. As the lead platoon, the platoon's missions are to—

(1) Protect its company from a surprise attack by providing early warning of enemy positions and obstacles.

(2) Assist the forward movement of its company by removing obstacles or finding a route around them.

(3) Defeat enemy forces within the platoon's capability.

(4) Rapidly develop the situation once contact is made.

b. Platoon leaders, must continually plan and visualize how they will deploy the squads and weapons to react to enemy contact. When the platoon is conducting a movement to contact, the leader should follow the fundamentals outlined below—

(1) Orient movement on the march objective.

(2) Plan to make contact with the smallest element possible.

(3) Report all information rapidly and accurately.

(4) Retain freedom of maneuver.

(5) Gain and maintain contact.

c. As discussed, platoons want to make contact through its lead squad—a squad through its lead fire team. In making contact with the smallest element possible, the leader tries to avoid having more than one squad pinned down by enemy fire at any one time. The leader can then conduct fire and movement with the other two squads to overcome the enemy or develop the situation.

d. The primary purpose of a movement to contact is to gain and maintain contact. The leader makes contact with the enemy, it should not break contact unless ordered to do so by the company commander.

e. Prior to beginning the planning for a movement to contact, the leader must make sure he has all the required information from the company commander. The leader needs to know—

(1) The friendly and enemy situation.

(2) The route (axis of advance) and desired rate of movement.

(3) The width of the area to be cleared.

(4) If there will be attachments (TOWs, engineers, air defense weapons).

(5) Is fire support available?

(6) The platoon's mission upon reaching the march objective.

f. Once the leader has this information, he can develop the scheme of maneuver and fire support plan.

2. **Movement to Contact by a Mechanized (M113) Platoons**.

a. The M113 platoons and squads participate in a movement to contact as part of a company or company team using movement techniques that are based on the likelihood of enemy contact. (These techniques were discussed in Part B of this lesson.)

b. The lead platoon in the movement to contact is required to perform those critical missions that were discussed earlier.

3. **Planning a Movement to Contact**.

a. The company or company team commander will normally assign the lead platoon in a movement to contact one or more march objectives. The march objective is selected at a place that is expected to ensure contact with the enemy. The leader may be instructed to seize the march objective or to bypass it if it is reached without enemy contact. The leader should cover both these situations in the operation order (OPORD) so that the squad leaders will not need further instructions when the platoon nears a march objective.

b. The platoon leader is normally given an axis of advance to move on. This assigned axis of advance will give the leader flexibility to move as necessary to bypass obstacles or impassable terrain. The axis of advance requires the leader to move according to the commander's intention. The route selected must keep the platoon oriented on the march objective and allow the other platoons of the company or company team to follow along with minimum difficulty.

c. Because it is not known when or where the platoon will make contact with the enemy, the leader should select a route that will not restrict vehicle movement. The route should avoid terrain that would restrict mounted movement, such as draws, ravines, narrow trails, or steep slopes.

d. The company or company team commander will normally assign a line of departure, phase lines, and check-points to control and coordinate the forward movement of the company or company team. (These and other offensive control measures are discussed in Lesson Two.) The lead platoon leader must report crossing all phase lines to the company or company team commander. The lead platoon does not stop at a phase line unless ordered to. If necessary, the leader may designate additional phase lines or checkpoints for internal platoon use to reduce the number and length of orders needed to control movement.

e. The leader can designate target reference points (TRPs) along the axis of advance to control fire and to designate targets. TRPs should be selected on identifiable terrain, likely enemy locations and avenues of approach. The leader may assign squads responsibility for covering specific terrain in relation to TRPs. This helps the platoon maintain all-round observation and

proper caliber .50 machine gun or Dragon orientation during movement. It also helps ensure that all likely targets are covered by at least one squad.

f. If the platoon is involved in a movement to contact with two companies or company teams abreast, contact points may be established on terrain features between the two companies to ensure physical coordination between the two units. The leader must know if his platoon is to make contact with an adjacent company or if contact will be established by a trailing platoon. Contact points are normally designated—

(1) If a location is critical (for example, a road crossing from one company's axis or zone of action to another's).

(2) If face-to-face contact is needed to ensure coordinated movement.

(3) As a contingency measure in the event a strong enemy force is contacted and it is necessary to establish a defense.

g. As with all types of platoons, once contact is made with the enemy, the platoon should not break contact unless ordered to by the company commander.

4. **Tactics and Techniques for a Movement to Contact**.

a. When conducting a movement to contact, a platoon moves using traveling overwatch or bounding overwatch movement techniques. M113 platoons normally move mounted to take full advantage of the speed and protection of the M113. However, if the platoon is moving through restrictive terrain, built up areas, or where there is a possibility of an ambush, the leader may want to have the dismount element lead. Defiles, bends in roads, or river crossing sites are likely ambush locations. The leader should deploy dismount teams or engineers to breach obstacles, to find a route around impassable terrain, and to provide security. Dismounted operations should be kept to a minimum because they reduce the tempo of the company or company team. Speed and continuous forward movement promotes surprise, reduces enemy reaction time, prevents the defender from taking effective countermeasures, and keeps him off balance.

b. The platoon leader must ensure the soldiers are alert during a movement to contact. One of the characteristics of a movement to contact is a lack of information about the enemy. The platoon has to be prepared for any contingency. Being prepared to rapidly suppress enemy antiarmor systems is a critical task to be accomplished on first contact.

c. The platoon's designated overwatch force should be prepared to provide immediate suppressive fire, especially with the caliber .50 machine gun. The leader may designate an M113 to be prepared to engage point targets, such as tanks or BMPs. The designated vehicle should be ready to fire the Dragon. This course of action is preferred because it is quicker to change from the Dragon to the caliber .50 machine gun than the other way around. However, the Dragon is a slow-firing system and speed of engagement is critical on first contact.

d. One of the major tasks of the lead element in a movement to contact is to protect the company or company team from surprise attack. Because, just as friendly forces attempt to

deceive the enemy by using demonstrations, feints and other means of deception, enemy forces employ the same tactics. The leader must be especially watchful for ambush sites and must clear them unless otherwise instructed.

e. When the platoon is given the mission of moving along and clearing a road as part of the movement to contact, it must do so with care. The enemy will often lay weapons, mainly antiarmor weapons, on a bend in the road so that they can ambush lead vehicles without trailing vehicles being able to overwatch. The enemy may also mine bends in the road and its shoulders. Dismount teams must check for mines and look on the far side of a bend in the road before moving around it. When the platoon approaches a bend in the road that cannot be bypassed, it can clear the areas as follows—

(1) Placing the carrier element in an overwatch position where it can cover as much of the bend as possible and any likely enemy positions adjacent to the bend, Figure 1-14.



Figure 1-14. Overwatch force

(2) Having dismount teams clear the terrain on either side of the bend. They should clear the high ground adjacent to the bend first. The overwatch force must be alert and prepared to support by fire and movement, Figure1-15.



Figure 1-15. Fire and movement support

(3) Having the dismount team check the road and shoulders for mines once they have cleared the terrain adjacent to the bend, Figure 1-16.



Figure 1-16. Approaching road bend

f. The leader should then move the platoon around the bend where it can establish an overwatch force on the route and then continue forward movement.

g. A defile is an ideal ambush site because it restricts movement. The platoon checks a defile the same way it checks a bend in the road. Before the platoon moves into a defile, it should clear the terrain on both sides. The dismount teams then check the defile for ambushes, mines, and booby traps.

h. A bridge must be considered an obstacle or possible ambush site and approached as such. Before it is crossed, it must be cleared.

(1) The carrier element moves into an overwatch position where it can cover the terrain on both flanks of the bridge and the far side, (Figure 1-17). A dismount team then checks the bridge and its approaches. This is best done by engineers, with infantry providing security. The dismount teams also reconnoiter for possible fording sites or bypasses.



Figure 1-17. Overwatch position

(2) If a fording site or bypass is available, the dismount teams cross, secure the far side of the bridge, and establish observation posts before the bridge is checked, Figure 1-18.



Figure 1-18. Dismount team forward

(3) This method is the most secure, but it is slow. If speed is important or a bypass or fording site is not available, the platoon can suppress the far side of the bridge and possible enemy positions on the far side with mortar or artillery smoke and high-explosive (HE) fire. Then mounted bounding overwatch can be used to the last covered position short of the bridge. Dismount teams can then move forward using bounding overwatch and check the bridge, while they are overwatched by the carrier element, Figure 1-19. Armored-vehicle-launched bridge (AVLB) may be used if available.



Figure 1-19. Bounding overwatch

5. **Actions on Contact**.

a. Because movement may result in contact between the moving unit and the enemy, the leader must be prepared to seize the initiative and apply the agility tenet and act faster than the enemy can react. How well the platoon reacts in the first few seconds after making contact may determine if it wins or loses. The platoon must perform battle drills. The platoon must act quickly and aggressively. The platoon must be trained to suppress, deploy, and report almost at the same time. The platoon leader must—

(1) **Develop the Situation**. The leader should act quickly to determine the enemy's strength, composition, and disposition. You or the forward observer may have to call for indirect fire to suppress the enemy. The platoon uses fire and movement to close with the enemy force. The platoon should seek good cover and concealment for the M113's so they are not needlessly exposed. If the situation permits, the dismount teams stay mounted so that the platoon can move out quickly. The extent of resistance and type of enemy fire must be considered when the leader makes his recommendation to the company or company team commander on the course of action he should take.

(2) **Choose a Course of Action**. Based on observations of the enemy, the leader can recommend several actions—

(a) **Conduct a hasty attack**. If the enemy resistance is light, recommend a hasty attack to destroy the enemy force. However, the platoon normally does not initiate the attack unless the team commander gives his approval.

(b) **Bypass**. In those instances where the enemy does not present a significant threat and bypass routes are available, the leader would normally recommend that the enemy positions be bypassed. The key is to not allow light enemy resistance to slow forward movement if bypass routes are available.

(c) **Fix or Suppress**. If strong enemy resistance prevents the platoon from maneuvering, you can use the platoon fires to fix and place effective fires on the enemy. The platoon would hold the enemy in position while the rest of the company or company team moves to conduct a hasty attack, uses engineers to breach obstacles, or bypasses.

(d) **Halt in covered position**. When the platoon encounters extensive obstacles that cannot be rapidly breached or bypassed, the leader may have to halt in covered positions, deploy the dismount element and have designated breaching forces reduce the obstacle. If engineers are available, they should be used as the breaching force. If the platoon does not have engineers, use specially equipped and trained members of the dismount elements to breach obstacles. The way to breach obstacles is to always use suppression, obscuration, security, and reduction (SOSR).

(3) **Report**. The platoon leader should require all squads to report all information about the enemy. As soon as the leader has reached a protected position, the leader should tell

the company commander all he knows about the enemy situation. The information report must answer the questions WHO, WHAT, WHERE, and WHEN. The specific report format and reporting details are listed below—

(a) **Size**. What is the size of the unit. The size of the enemy unit is the number of troops seen-for example, "20 enemy infantrymen, "not" two infantry squads"; or "six enemy tanks, not two enemy tank platoons."

(b) **Activity.** What the enemy was seen doing; for example, "emplacing antitank mines in the road."

(c) **Location**. Where the enemy was seen? If a map is available, the coordinates are reported; for example, "GL 875561." If a map is not available, a key terrain feature is reported in relation to the location; for example, "on the Bann Road 400 meters south of the Kell River Bridge."

(d) **Unit**. What type unit was it? The unit to which an enemy soldier belongs may be difficult to determine. Bumper markings on vehicles are reported. Some armies have particular uniforms, headgear, and colored tabs on uniforms that identify the type unit. The unit's actions may indicate its type, or the kind of equipment observed may be peculiar to a certain type of unit. For example, a light armored vehicle may indicate a reconnaissance unit.

(e) **Time**. What time was it? The time when the enemy activity was seen, not the time of the report.

(f) **Equipment**. What equipment did they have? All of the equipment the enemy was wearing or using is reported. If an item of equipment or type of vehicle was not recognized, it is sketched and the sketch is submitted with the report.

b. Once the leader has developed the situation and decided on a course of action, he needs to update the earlier report given to the commander. In some cases, the report may require the commander to change the plan. Casualties are treated and evacuated as the mission permits. Casualty reports are submitted later to update unit manning rosters.

6. **Overwatch**.

a. When the company or company team is using bounding overwatch, the overwatch force must be ready, once contact is made, to suppress enemy weapons that threaten the bounding force.

b. Team leaders or gunners should be instructed to take the following actions when they are in an overwatch position and spot an antitank gun or antitank guided missile (ATGM) fired, or in a position to fire. They should immediately open fire on the spot, at the base of the smoke trail, or at the gun flash, and give the warning over the radio.

c. If the company or company team is using traveling overwatch, the overwatch platoon is trained to quickly fire on the enemy, deploy to covered firing positions, and continue to fire. The overwatch force should not move into areas where it may be hit by enemy fire directed at

the lead platoon. It should also avoid areas or fire that prevents it from maneuvering toward the enemy. The dismount element should remain mounted to reduce its exposure to enemy indirect fire and to allow the platoon to move quickly. The platoon should continue to place suppressive fire on the enemy until the lead platoon reaches covered positions. The platoon would then engage only clearly identified targets or direct fire to areas designated by the company or company team commander.

7. **Contact Vehicle Leading Mounted**.

a. The first action on contact when leading with a vehicle mounted, is to make sure a heavy volume of fire is delivered with the caliber .50 machine gun and with the 7.62-mm machine gun/M249 light machine gun. Other weapons are fired at only clearly identified targets that are within their range.

b. Any M113 that are exposed to enemy fire should move rapidly to hull-down firing positions. Gunners should be told to continue firing while drivers are moving the carriers.

c. If the platoon is receiving enemy antiarmor fire, and if return fire is unable to suppress it, squad leaders and team leaders (TL) may decide to fire the smoke grenade launchers to hide the vehicles from enemy gunners. Also, drivers must take evasive actions to avoid an antitank guided missile (ATGM) such as: driving an erratic, zigzag path at angles to the ATGM; varying the vehicle speed; turning quickly to the right or left in the last second of the missile's flight; and getting some type of obstruction, such as trees, telephone poles, or bushes, between the enemy firing position and the carrier, Figure 1-20.

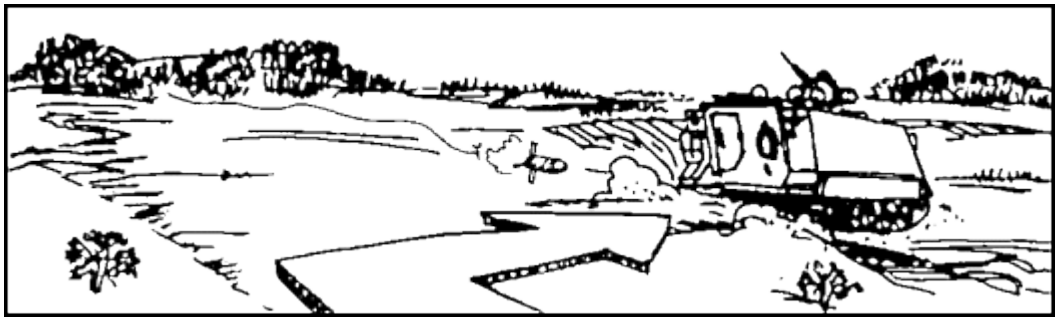


Figure 1-20. Sharp turn

8. **Contact Vehicle Leading Dismounted**.

a. If the dismount element is required to lead and clear an obstacle or likely ambush site, or to lead through a defile or town, contact normally will be made at close range.

b. When the dismount element is fired on, the lead dismount team must return fire at once and take cover and report. Overwatch teams must be alert and prepared to return fire to cover the leading team. They should also, if possible, designate targets for the carrier element or the tank platoon.

c. If a dismount team spots an enemy tank or other armored vehicle, it can mark the vehicle for the carrier element or tank platoon using tracer fire from the M249 machine gun. Before this markby-fire method is used, the dismount element leader should contact the carrier element to

be sure it is prepared to engage the vehicle. The enemy may return fire at the M249 if he is not engaged rapidly by the overwatching M113, tanks, or TOW vehicle.

d. The dismount element should be told that if it sees the enemy first, to hold its fire, deploy to covered firing positions, and report the situation to the platoon leader. However, if the dismount element is certain it can destroy the enemy force with surprise fire, it should engage the enemy without delay.

9. **BFV Platoon Missions.**

a. Like M113 platoons, BFV platoons and squads participate in a movement to contact as part of the company or company team using the movement techniques explained in Part B. The lead platoon in the movement to contact performs the same critical tasks as those listed earlier.

b. The remaining platoons within the company or company team are assigned missions and positions within the formation, based on the movement techniques being used. Their missions normally include overwatching the lead platoon and reacting with fire and movement once contact is made.

10. **BFV Platoon Planning**.

a. A BFV platoon leader uses the planning steps and considerations similar to M113 platoons, except for some fire control and distribution factors.

b. Fire control and distribution in BFV platoons are accomplished through the use of boundaries, fire plans, pyrotechnics, and weapons-ready posture. The scarcity of information about the enemy in the movement to contact makes fire control and distribution even more important. The platoon's weapons-ready posture must not only be flexible enough to respond to an unclear enemy situation, but the leader must also vary it between the bounding and overwatching elements. There are a variety of weapons that can be controlled from the BFV's turret and there is always the risk that all of the on-board ammunition can be expended if the proper control measures are not implemented and enforced.

c. All elements must erect their TOWs and perform the self-test. This is true although not all will be designated to fire. The leader designates which vehicles will prepare 25-mm high explosive incendiary tracer (HEI-T), armor-piercing discarding sabot (APDS); and 7.62-mm coaxial machine gun.

d. If restrictive terrain dominates the route of march, the bounding element may not have the same fields of fire as the overwatching element and may be less capable of employing its TOWs. Once again, the leader designates which vehicles will be prepared to fire the various weapons and type of ammunition.

e. Fire planning is crucial in the movement to contact because the enemy situation is often poorly defined and the place where contact will occur is unknown. The FO is the principal assistant to the platoon leader in fire planning. The platoon leader should plan fires along the entire route, specifically at possible contact points (key terrain, choke points) and on identifiable terrain features to aid in shifting fires.

f. The leader must ensure that the FO coordinates and updates the fire plan with the fire support officer (FSO) at company team level. If this is not done, when contact is made the platoon may not utilize all the fires that the company team has available.

g. Air guards are especially critical in a movement to contact. If the cargo hatch is open, an air guard can be designated to watch to the sides and rear—front view is blocked by the turret. The Bradley commander, in one or more of the BFVs, will have to act as an air guard oriented to the front.

h. Once contact is made with the enemy, the platoon should not break contact unless ordered by the company commander. Additionally, the leader should develop the situation by gathering and reporting critical information about the enemy and recommending a course of action.

11. **BFV Platoon Actions on Contact**.

a. When a BFV platoon makes contact, it must react quickly and aggressively, using battle drills. The platoon's actions in the first few seconds after contact may determine whether a battle is won or lost. Those actions must include several initial moves that occur almost simultaneously: return fire, deploy, and report. The platoon leader must—

(1) **Develop the situation**. The leader should act quickly to determine the enemy's strength, composition, and disposition. He may call for indirect fire support and use fire and movement to develop the situation. In doing so, the leader should attempt to overrun the position if enemy resistance is weak. The BFVs should not be exposed needlessly. The rifle teams normally remain mounted so the platoon can move without delay. The degree of resistance and type of enemy fire will influence the leader's recommendation to the company or company team commander on a course of action to be taken.

(2) **Choose a course of action**. Based on observation of the enemy, the leader can recommend several actions if the enemy force cannot be overrun.

(a) **Bypass**. If the enemy does not present a meaningful threat and bypass routes are available, the platoon does not allow light enemy resistance to slow forward movement unless it poses a threat to the rest of the company team.

(b) **Conduct a hasty attack**. If the enemy resistance is light, the leader can recommend a hasty attack to destroy the enemy force. The platoon normally does not attack unless the team commander approves, but may choose to overrun light resistance if the mission orders indicate so.

(c) **Fix or suppress**. If there is strong enemy resistance and the platoon cannot move, the leader can have the platoon's fires fix or suppress the enemy. This is done using direct and indirect fires to hold the enemy in position while the rest of the company or company team moves to conduct a hasty attack, uses engineers to breach obstacles, or bypasses. To fix the enemy, vehicles are deployed and possibly the infantry can assume an overwatch position to take the enemy under fire and limit the enemy's ability to maneuver.

b. **Report**. As soon as the platoon has reached a protected position, the leader should report to the company commander all you know about the enemy. Once the leader has developed the situation and decided on a course of action, he updates his earlier report to the commander. In some cases, the commander may change the plan.

12. **Conclusion**. This completes the discussion on conducting a movement to contact. We discussed missions and tasks of the lead platoon, the overwatch element, planning a movement to contact, with special emphasis on fire control and distribution for BFV platoons, and actions on contact including the need for bold and aggressive action in the first few seconds once contact is made.

PART D

MANEUVER OF A PLATOON, MANEUVER A MECHANIZED M113 or BFV PLATOON, AND ATTACK BY A PLATOON

1. **General**.

a. When the platoon or a squad makes contact with the enemy, the movement techniques stop and fire and movement begins. However, fire and movement are an extension of bounding overwatch.

b. The platoon will conduct fire and movement to close with and destroy the enemy, to learn more of his strength and disposition, or to move away from him.

c. When the platoon is conducting fire and movement, both actions will be taking place at the same time. For example, one fire element will direct fire at the enemy to cover the move of a maneuver element. At the same time, a maneuver element will move either to close with the enemy or to a better position from which to shoot at him. Depending on the distance to the enemy positions and the availability of cover, the fire element and the maneuver element switch roles as needed to keep moving. Before the maneuver element moves beyond supporting range of the fire element, it takes a position from which it can shoot at the enemy. When this happens, the fire element becomes the maneuver element for the next move.

d. An element may be one soldier, a fire team, a squad, or an entire platoon. Fire and movement means an element supporting by fire, while an element moves or maneuvers. The size of the elements is not the determining factor in whether its fire and movement.

e. When contact is made, leaders must designate both fire elements and maneuver elements.

f. The best position for a fire element is on high ground that is to the flank of the maneuver element. By choosing this type location, the fire of the fire element will not be masked by the maneuver element until the last moment. The fire element should be moved into a firing position undetected.

g. Once the fire element is in position, it should place suppressive fire on the enemy. If the suppressive fire is effective, the enemy cannot return fire. Once this happens, the rate of fire, can be reduced but suppression must be continued. When the maneuver element nears its objective, the fire element increases the its rate of fire. The platoon continues to fire and movement until enemy resistance ceases.

2. **Fire**.

a. When a platoon is engaged in fire and movement, some of the fire support may come from artillery, mortars, and TOWs, (rifle and M113 platoons). However, most of a platoon's fire support is from its rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, Dragons, and, in the case of BFV platoons, the 25-mm gun and TOWs. When your rifle platoon moves toward its objective with its rifle squads alternately firing and moving—switching roles as fire element and maneuver element—the machine guns and Dragons will be part of the fire element. These weapons may be moved from position to position, joining each element as it becomes the fire element, Figure 1-21.

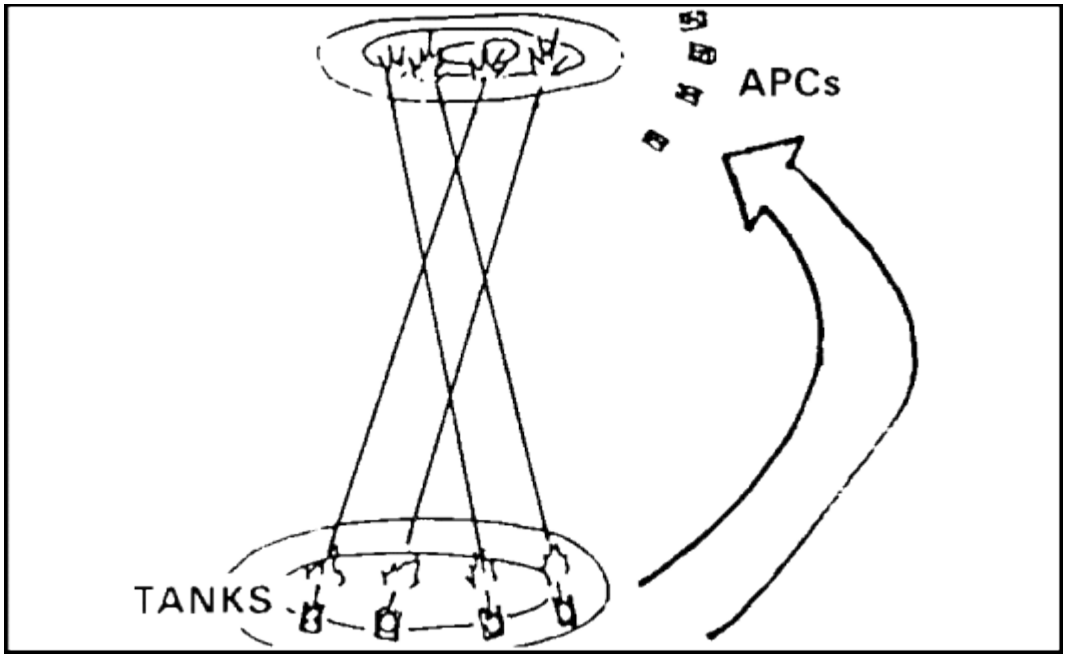


Figure 1-21. Fire and movement

b. The platoon leader has the option of advancing the rifle platoon by fire and movement using the same element to maneuver all the way to the objective. Depending on the situation the leader may decide to use the platoon's machine guns and Dragons as the fire element or may use one or two squads and these weapons. It is the actions taken (fire or movement), not the size of the element, that determines its mission. The leader may give control of the fire element to the platoon sergeant or a rifle squad leader in the fire element. The platoon leader should go with the maneuver element.

c. As the maneuver element gets in and among enemy positions, there is a danger that it may mask the fire from the fire element. The gunners should then slowly "walk" (move) fire across the objective just in front of the maneuver element, or shift to another target. Once they cease fire, the leader can have them move forward to join in the reorganization and consolidation, or in a continuation of the attack, Figure 1-22.

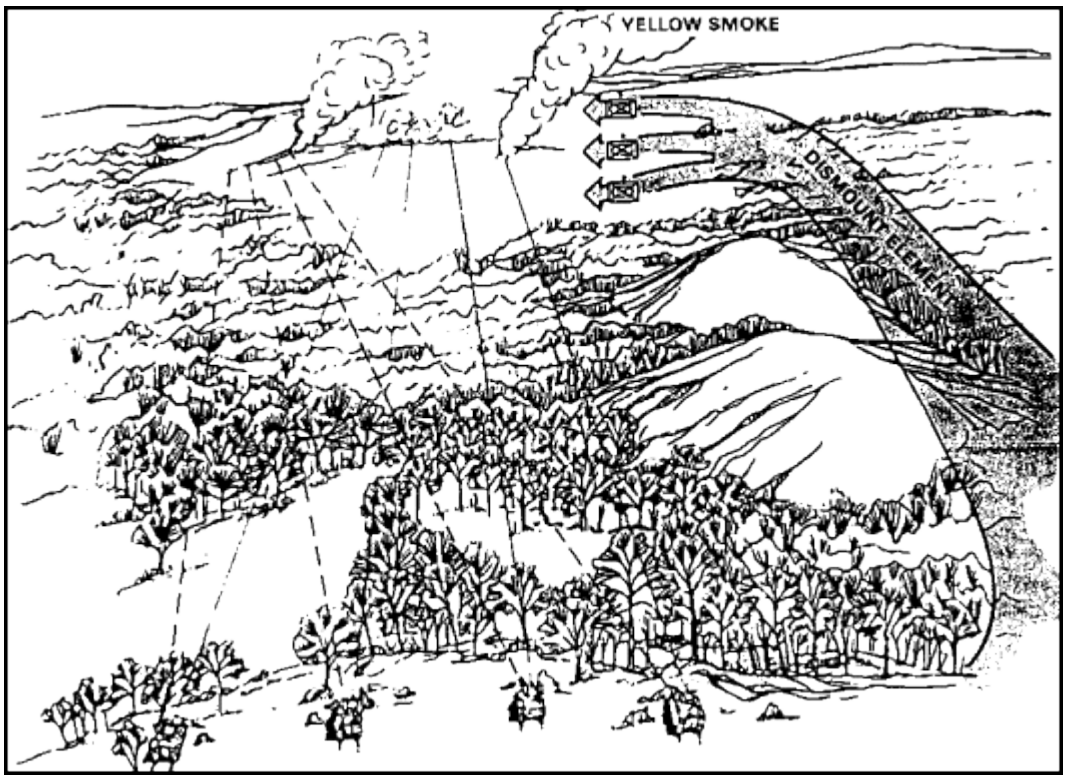


Figure 1-22. Shifting fire

3. **Maneuver**.

a. During maneuver, squad and team leaders control and lead their men by example, by voice command, by arm-and-hand signals, or by other visual or sound (whistle) signals. Their men move by the best method for the situation. This may be by crawling or by short rushes from cover to cover. When an assault is conducted, it must be aggressive so the platoon does not slow down as the men close with the enemy. As it fights its way through the objective, the platoon must avoid exposure to enemy fire from behind or to the flanks of the objective.

b. Soldiers may use a high or low crawl to advance forward, Figure 1-23. The crawl is slow but it helps avoid exposure to fire. Short rushes from cover to cover may be used when enemy fire allows brief exposure. Soldiers can rush singly, in pairs, or by fire teams in 3 to 5 second rushes, Figure 1-24. A rush is kept short to keep the enemy machine gunners from acquiring rushing men. The leader should make sure they are trained to look for cover before starting the rush and then head straight to it. The rush should be supported by fire, if at all possible.

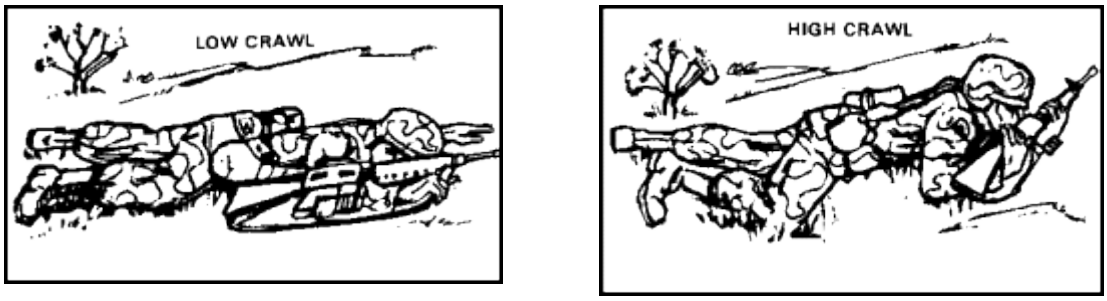


Figure 1-23. The crawl



Figure 1-24. Short rushes

4. **BFV Maneuver**.

a. Maneuver by a BFV platoon is the movement of forces to achieve a position of advantage over the enemy. As with other infantry platoons, it consists of two actions that take place at the same time. The support element overwatches and covers a moving force by fire if necessary and by employing indirect fires. The moving force moves forward to close with the enemy or to reach a better position from which to fire at the enemy.

b. **Mounted**. If a BFV platoon is conducting a mounted move, the company commander may have one platoon supported by fire while another platoon moves. The platoon leader of the moving platoon moves his platoon, using covered and concealed routes and the traveling technique. The leader of the support-by-fire platoon occupies dominating positions, normally high and to the flank of the moving platoon and places suppressive fire on the enemy.

(1) The support-by-fire platoon will suppress known or suspected enemy positions 2 or 3 kilometers away. The platoon's main task is to provide fire to keep the enemy's head down, to kill dismounted infantry and thin skinned vehicles, and to destroy antitank weapons systems. The 25-mm gun fire is used to suppress enemy positions as well as to

destroy point targets. If the overwatch position is within 900 meters of the target, the 7.62-mm coaxial machine gun can be used for suppression of dismounted personnel.

(2) If the enemy situation is such that the platoon leader is forced to move the fighting vehicles while under fire, the fighting vehicles work in pairs using the wingman concept. Two of the vehicles (one pair) support by fire, while the other two move. The wingman usually follows to the flank and rear and provides security. The wingman also engages targets of opportunity that are acquired while on the move. The platoon sergeant's wingman performs the same actions.

(3) In those instances when the commander is traveling with the moving platoons, the company executive officer may be positioned with the support-by-fire platoon to coordinate the employment of direct and indirect fires to fit the scheme of maneuver established in the operation order.

c. **Dismounted**. How members of the rifle teams move depends on the intensity of enemy fire. Crawling may be called for when a moving dismount element faces intense fire and there is little cover. Soldiers use the low or high crawl depending on the situation, the requirement for speed, and the example of their leader. Progress is slow here, but exposure to enemy observation and fire is reduced. When not moving forward, the individual infantryman delivers suppressive fire on the enemy. If necessary, infantrymen may advance all the way into and through positions by crawling.

(1) Short rushes from covered position to covered position may be used when enemy fire allows brief exposure. Rifle teams, two-man teams, or individuals may advance by short rushes to avoid accurate enemy fire. Soldiers should not stay up longer than 3 to 5 seconds. Thus, the enemy does not have enough time to "engage" with automatic weapon fire. The rule is rush from cover to cover, keeping a low silhouette.

(2) The base-of-fire element uses its fire to cover and protect the advance of the moving force. Whenever possible, the base-of-fire element should move undetected into a firing position. A high volume of surprise fire has a greater effect than fire delivered from a known position.

(3) When the base-of-fire element is in position, the following usually takes place—

(a) A heavy volume of fire is placed on the enemy position to destroy or suppress it.

(b) When the enemy position is suppressed, the-rate of fire is decreased to keep the enemy down. This lets the moving force assault the position before the enemy can react.

(c) Either on signal or when the assault begins, the base-of-fire element will cease fire, shift its fire to another target area, or more desirably, "shift" its fire across the objective in front of the moving force and then shift beyond the objective or cease its fire as shown in Figure 1-22.

(d) Positions for the base-of-fire element should be selected so that the moving force does not mask the supporting fires. For this reason, selected base-of-fire element positions are often elevated and to the flank of the moving force. The moving force should neither mask the fire of the base-of-fire element nor move outside its protection, Figure 1-25.

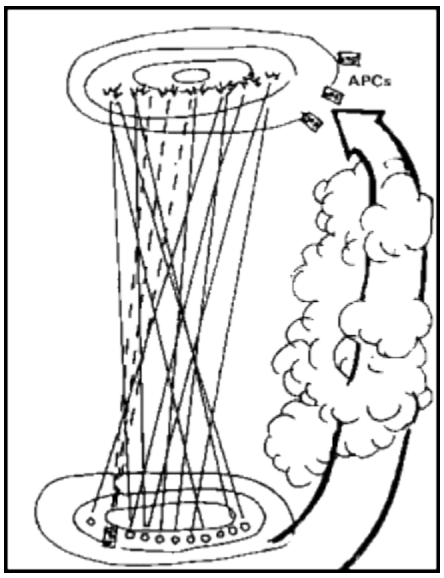


Figure 1-25. Base-of-Fire element

(e) Effective fire on the enemy is the key to forward movement. Fires are directed at destroying or suppressing the enemy. Suppressive fire is placed on the enemy to keep him from firing effectively at the moving force.

(f) The base-of-fire element can concentrate or distribute its fire. In either case, the fire must be controlled. The fire must be effectively directed at the enemy and must not endanger the moving force.

(g) There are two types of fire that the base-of-fire element can deliver in support of the moving force.

(h) **Point fire**. Point fire is directed against a specific identified target, such as a machine gun or ATGM position. All weapons are fired at the target. Spreading out the base-of-fire element fires aids in point fire because the fire is directed from multiple directions. Point fire is not often used, because the platoon seldom encounters single, clearly identified enemy weapon, Figure 1-26.

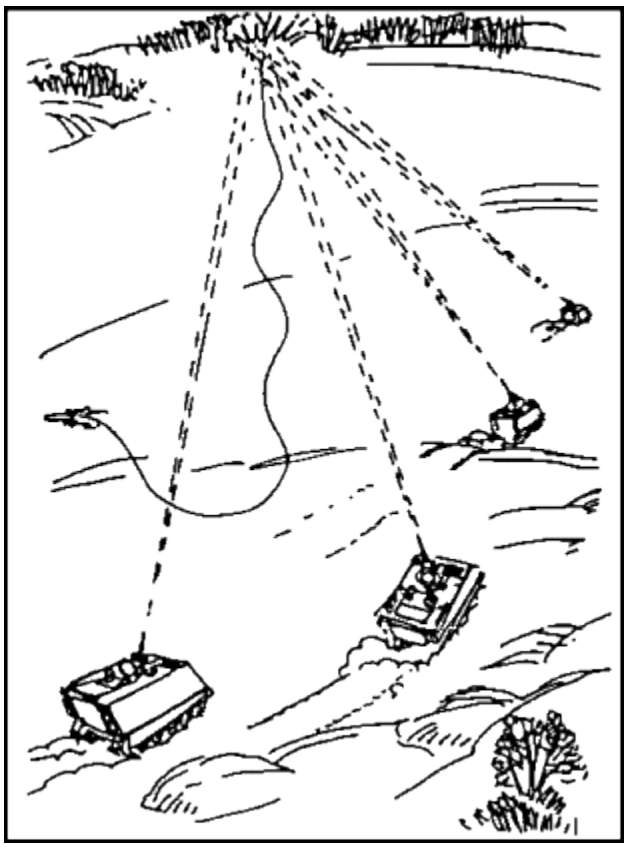


Figure 1-26. Point fire

(i) **Area fire**. Area fire is distributed over a larger area when enemy positions are more numerous or less obvious. Each weapon or BFV in the base-of-fire element is given a specific sector of the target area to fire into. This is done to ensure that the entire target area is covered by fire and observation, Figure 1-27.

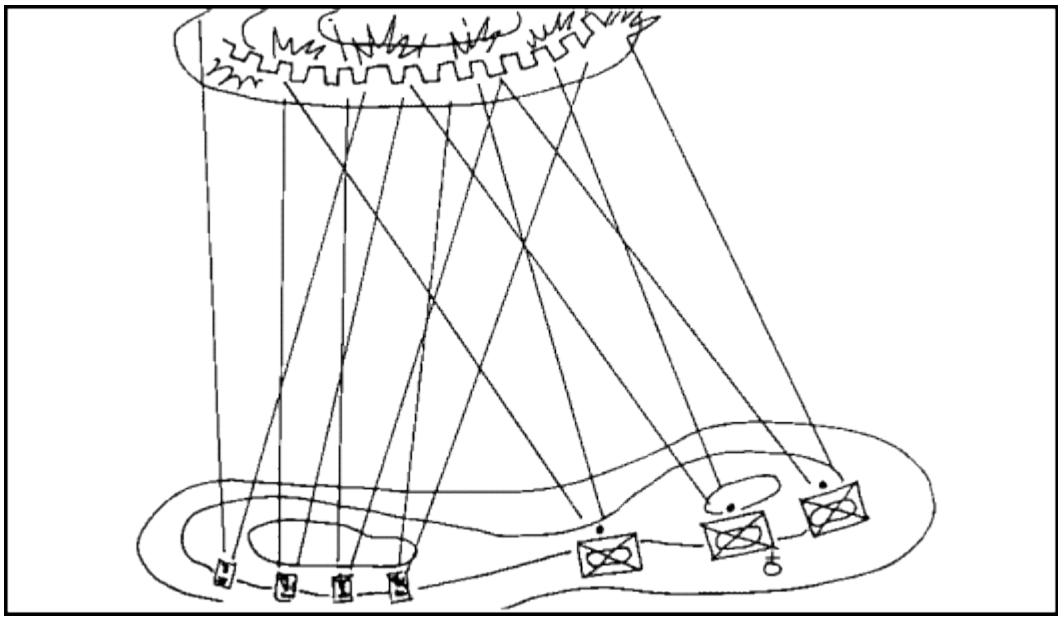


Figure 1-27. Area fire

(j) When the fighting vehicle element is the base of fire, the platoon sergeant will mark or identify the target area by oral order or by tracer fire. Each of the three remaining fighting vehicle crews takes one-third of the target area corresponding to its position in the base-of-fire element (left, middle, or right). The platoon sergeant will not take a specific part of the target area. He will observe and control the fire of the other three vehicles and fire at targets of opportunity However, the terrain may force him to cover a specific part of the objective.

(k) Fire is distributed in width and depth to keep all parts of the target under fire. Fire is placed on likely enemy positions rather than into a general area. Each BFV gunner and dismounted infantryman fires his first shot on that part of the target that corresponds to his relative position in the base-of-fire element. For example, if he is left of his leader, he fires left of his leader's tracers. He then distributes his remaining shots several meters right and left and front and rear of his first shot.

(l) When a Dragon is in the base-of-fire element, the antiarmor specialist stays under the squad leader's direct control. He fires the Dragons at important targets, such as enemy armored vehicles and key weapons. The platoon leader may keep one of the rifle team's Dragons under his direct control. In the absence of appropriate Dragon targets, the antiarmor specialists will fire their rifles.

(m) Area fire permits the base-of-fire element to rapidly cover an entire target area, even if the enemy cannot be seen. Area fire is the quickest and best way to bring all parts of a target under fire.

5. **Summary.** This completes Lesson One. You should know how to identify the fundamentals and purpose of the offense, how to select platoon movement formations, the considerations for conducting a movement to contact, and the procedures for directing fire and movement of a platoon against an enemy position. After reviewing all the material in this lesson, you should complete the practice exercise for Lesson one. Answers and feedback for the questions in the practice exercise are provided to show you where further study is required.

LESSON 1
PRACTICE EXERCISE

Instructions The following items will test your understanding of the material covered in this lesson. There is only one correct answer for each item. When you have completed the exercise, check your answers with the answer key that follows. If you answer any item incorrectly, review that part of the lesson which contains the portion involved.

Situation: You are a platoon leader. You have just received the company warning order for an offensive operation. You are executing your troop-leading procedures and preparing to issue your platoon order and participate in an offensive operation.

1. While making a tentative plan for the upcoming offensive operation, you are aware that, historically, most successful offensive operations have—

 ○ A. attacked enemy strong points.

 B. produced more enemy prisoners than casualties.

 C. destroyed enemy installations and facilities.

 D. induced the enemy to shift forces from critical areas.

2. You are arranging your squads and fire teams for movement on the battlefield. When enemy contact is not likely, the movement technique used is—

 A. traveling.

 B. traveling overwatch.

 C. bounding overwatch.

 D. wedge formation.

3. You are explaining the fundamentals of movement to your squad leaders. You state that the key to moving successfully is—

 A. move away from key terrain.

 B. make contact with the lead element.

 C. select the best combination of formations and movement techniques in each situation.

 D. move out of the range of your platoon's organic indirect fire support.

4. Your platoon is preparing to conduct a movement to contact. You are briefing your platoon on the relationship between movement to contact, attacks, exploitations, and pursuit. You explain that a movement to contact is—

 A. part of the preparatory phase of offensive operations.

 B. only conducted during mobile or mechanized operations.

 C. characterized by detailed information about the enemy's dispositions.

 D. started when the forces become engaged.

5. You are completing your planning prior to conducting a movement to contact. What control measure can be used to control movement of the platoon? You—

 A. assign an additional line of departure.

 B. assign additional radios to the squads.

 C. modify the movement technique.

 D. designate additional phase lines and checkpoints.

6. You are briefing your squad leaders on fire and movement. You explain that a fire element—

 A. will always be designated by the company or company team commander.

 B. may be a soldier, a fire team, or an entire platoon.

 C. will be designated before contact is made.

 D. should remain a fire element, once it is so designated.

7. Your platoon has made contact with the enemy, and you are advancing towards the objective by fire and movement. You must decide which element you will control. You—

 A. give control of the maneuver element to the platoon sergeant.

 B. task a squad leader to control the maneuver element.

 C. go with the maneuver element.

 D. check with company commander to see whether you should control the fire or the maneuver element.

LESSON 2

TACTICAL CONTROL MEASURES, CONSOLIDATION, AND REORGANIZATION IN THE OFFENSE

OVERVIEW

LESSON DESCRIPTION: Tactical control measures, consolidation, and reorganization in the offense.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Action:	Identify tactical control measures, consolidation, and reorganization (offense).
Condition:	Given the subcourse material contained in this lesson.
Standard:	The student will demonstrate his comprehension and knowledge by identifying tactical control measures (offense), consolidating and reorganizing a platoon following enemy contact (offense), and completing the practical exercise at the end of the lesson.
References:	The material in this lesson was derived from the following publications: FM 7-7 FM 7-7J FM 7-8

INTRODUCTION

As the platoon leader, your responsibility is the control of the platoon. During the conduct of an operation the platoon leader may receive many control measures from the company commander. These control measures are normally less restrictive in order to permit the platoon leader the freedom of action in executing assigned missions. All control measures should be easily identifiable on the ground.

PART A

OFFENSIVE TACTICAL CONTROL MEASURES

1. **GENERAL.**

a. Leaders use graphic control measures to regulate or direct the platoon's movement, positions, and fire.

b. Control measures are not intended to restrict the exercise of initiative (the function of command). Leaders use control measures to clarify their intent, focus the platoon or squad effort, and ensure synchronization. Each control measure should have a specific purpose that contributes to mission accomplishment. If a control measure fails the purpose test, leaders should not use it.

c. Offensive control measures can be drawn on a map, overlay, sketch or a terrain model. Leaders should strive to keep control measures easily identifiable and simple. Graphic control measures in the offense include—

(1) **Assembly area**. An area occupied by a unit when it is preparing for future operations. It should be on easily defensible terrain. An all-round defense is prepared

within the time available. Desirable characteristics are concealment, room for dispersion, good routes forward and security from ground or air attack. While the unit is in this area, these activities may take place—

(a) Orders are issued.

(b) The unit is organized for its mission.

(c) Maintenance is done.

(d) Inspections are done.

(e) The unit is resupplied.

(f) The unit rehearses.

(g) The unit rests.

(2) **Attack position**. A covered and concealed place just behind the line of departure. The unit makes final coordination and deploys into the initial attack formation. The platoon stops in the attack position ***only*** when final preparations cannot be completed before reaching it or if the platoon is ahead of schedule for the attack.

(3) **Line of departure (LD)**. A linear feature usually perpendicular to the direction of attack. It is used as a start line to coordinate the advance of attacking units. It is usually picked by the company commander. Ideally, it is held by friendly troops. The time of attack is the time for the unit to start crossing the LD. The LD may be the line of contact with the enemy. The line of contact (LC) is the trace of friendly units in contact with the enemy.

(4) **Direction of attack**. A specific route along which the center of mass of a unit is to advance. It is used when a commander needs to closely maintain control over the movement of his attacking units. The unit attacking along a direction of attack must clear the route of all enemy resistance. Units are not free to maneuver off the assigned route.

(5) **Boundaries**. Lateral limits used to control the lateral movement and fire of units. A unit may shoot direct fire weapons across its boundary at a clearly identified target. Indirect fire may be fired across a boundary after coordination with adjacent units. Boundaries are rarely established lower than company level. In highly compartmented areas, such as towns, platoon boundaries may be used.

(6) **Route**. A course a unit must follow to get from one location to another. The beginning of the route is designated as the start point (SP) and the end is designated as the release point (RP). A route is used to control movement prior to the LD.

(7) **Axis of advance**. A broadly defined route that indicates the general direction of attack for a unit. A unit may fire and movement to either side of an axis of advance, as long as it does not interfere with adjacent units. Squads are rarely given an axis of advance.

(8) **Phase Line (PL)**. A linear feature perpendicular to the direction of attack that is used to control the movement of units. Normally, units do not stop at phase lines but must report their arrival at them.

(9) **Final coordination line (FCL)**. A line close to the enemy positions and used to coordinate lifting or shifting of supporting fire or to coordinate the deployment of attacking units before an assault.

(10) **Checkpoint**. A location on the ground designated to provide a reference for quickly reporting locations and for controlling the movements of units. Checkpoints should not be used to report enemy locations.

(11) **Assault position**. A position designated between the LD and the objective where units complete the final deployment into their assault formation. It should be the last covered and concealed position short of the objective.

(12) **Objective**. The area or enemy force to be attacked. A unit assigned an objective must secure it or destroy the enemy force. The size of an objective must be within the capabilities of the unit to which it is assigned. A platoon objective may be a separate terrain feature, or a part of the company's objective. Squads are not normally assigned separate objectives. Squads attack to seize portions of the platoon's objective.

(13) **Linkup point**. An easy identifiable point on the ground where two forces conducting a linkup meet. When one force is stationary, linkup points normally are established where the moving force's routes of advance intersect the stationary force's security elements. Linkup points for two moving forces are established on boundaries where the two forces are expected to converge.

(14) **Contact point**. A place where two or more friendly units are required to make physical contact.

(15) **Start point**. A clearly defined initial control point on a route at which specified elements of a column of ground vehicles or flight of aircraft come under the control of the commander having responsibility for the movement.

2. **Limited Visibility Control Measures**.

a. The platoon may attack at night and during other periods of limited visibility. Darkness is just one condition that reduces a soldier's ability to see. Smoke, fog, dust, and heavy rain or snow also limit visibility. When visibility is poor, the following control measures may be used in addition to or instead of, some of those previously discussed. The degree of visibility will determine which of these measures are necessary.

b. The following limited visibility control measures are—

(1) **Point of Departure (PD)**. The exact place where a unit must cross the LD. The PD is often used when passing through friendly positions. Guides may be posted there to help control movement.

(2) **Release Point (RP)**. A point where a leader releases control of his subunits to their respective leaders. At a platoon RP, the company commander releases control of his platoons to the platoon leaders.

(3) **Probable Line of Deployment (PLD**). A location on the ground, short of the objective, where units in a night attack complete final deployment into their assault formation. The PLD should be on a terrain feature that is easy to find at night. It should be perpendicular to the direction of attack. It is generally as close to known enemy positions on the objective as the attacking commander thinks his troops can get without being detected. If practical, it should be on the enemy side of any obstacles.

(4) **Limit of Advance**. A restrictive control measure which specifies the farthest distance a unit may move across its objective in an attack. It should be on an easily recognizable terrain feature far enough beyond and to the flanks of the objective to give security elements space in which to do their job.

(5) **Infiltration lane**. A lane through which a unit moves by stealth in order to pass through lines without being detected. An infiltrating unit must stay within the limits of the lane.

3. **Conclusion**. This concludes the discussions of offensive tactical control measures, during which the methods and devices leaders use to regulate and direct their unit's movements were covered. Control measures which are used during limited visibility were also covered. It must be remembered that a leader should only use those control measures needed to control the operation.

PART B

CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION

1. **General**.

a. This part covers the consolidation and reorganization actions a platoon must take once the objective is seized.

b. Once enemy resistance on the objective has ceased, the platoon leader must quickly take steps to consolidate and prepare to defend against a counterattack.

2. **Consolidation**. During consolidation, the platoon leader's task and that of the squad leaders is to organize and position the men, squads, and weapons on the newly seized objective. The objective is consolidated so that it can be defended against a counterattack. During the consolidation of the objective is the most likely time for the enemy to launch a counterattack. The company commander will assign a part of the company's objective to each of the platoon leaders to consolidate. The commander may use coordinating points or a defensive control measure to make sure the platoons tie in with each other. A platoon leader will consolidate the objective by either the clock technique or the terrain feature technique.

a. **Clock Technique**. In using this technique, the platoon leader designates either a compass direction or the direction of attack as 12 o'clock. He then uses clock positions to identify the left

and right boundaries for squads. The platoon leader positions key weapons along the most likely avenue of approach based on his assessment of the terrain, Figure 2-1.

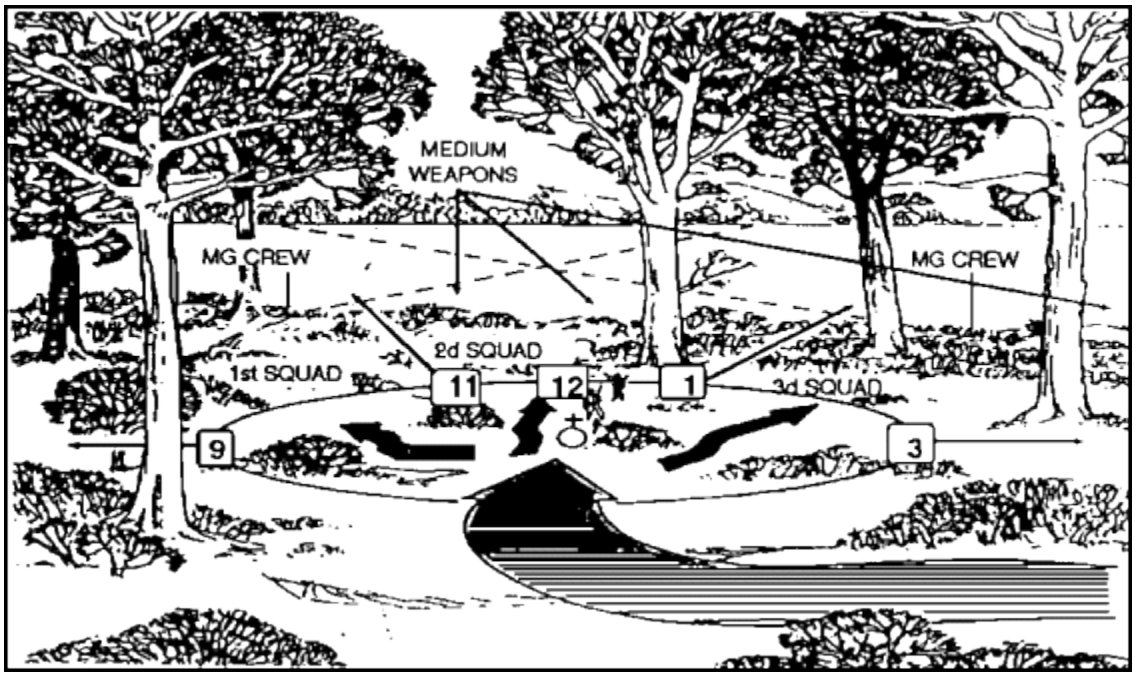


Figure 2-1. Clock technique

b. **Terrain feature technique**. In a similar manner, the platoon leader identifies obvious terrain features as the left and right limits for squads. In both techniques, he ensures that squad sectors of fire overlap each other and provide mutual support for adjacent units, Figure 2-2.

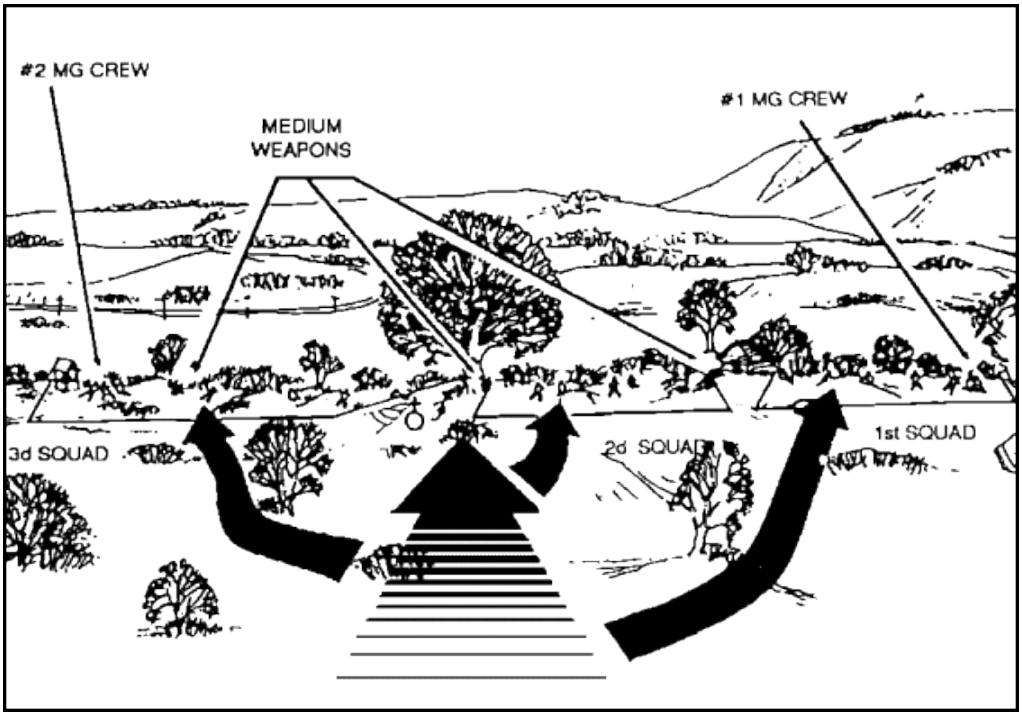


Figure 2-2. Terrain feature technique

3. **Reorganization**.

a. Once platoons have consolidated on the objective, they begin to reorganize. Platoons reorganize to continue the attack.

b. Reorganization involves—

(1) Reestablishing command and control.

(2) Remanning key weapons, redistributing ammunition and equipment.

(3) Clearing the objective of casualties and enemy prisoners of war (EPW).

(4) Assessing and reporting the platoon status of personnel, ammunition, supplies, and essential equipment.

4. **Consolidation and Reorganization of an M113 and BFV Platoon**.

a. **Consolidation of an M113 Platoon**. The platoon leader of an M113 platoon must consider the carriers in planning consolidation and reorganization actions. As stated earlier, the platoon should consolidate and reorganization as soon as it takes an objective. This is done so that the platoon is prepared to—

(1) Repel an enemy counterattack.

(2) Continue with the attack.

b. **Platoon Holding Objective**. The platoon must hold the objective until the company commander orders other action. At times, especially with mounted assaults, the platoon may be directed to continue the attack with little or no hesitation in order to exploit success. In this situation, the platoon leader focuses only on doing the required reorganization, since consolidation is unnecessary. Additional consolidation actions the platoon leader must take are —

(1) Occupy the position designated in the attack order. Move the M113 into hull-down positions, if available, and assigned specific sector of fire.

(2) Designate positions for the dismount teams if the company commander wants them deployed away from the carrier team. The positions will normally be on a dismounted avenue of approach to the objective. The platoon leader should have the dismount team prepare hasty fighting positions as quickly as possible.

c. **Reorganization of an M113 Platoon**. During reorganization the platoon leader should also follow the SOP. One key is to make sure the squad leaders redistribute ammunition among dismount team members and obtain ammunition, as required, from the carrier.

d. **Consolidation of a BFV Platoon**. Once enemy resistance on the objective has ceased, the platoon must quickly take steps to consolidate and prepare to defend against a counter-attack. Consolidation is planned and rehearsed before the attack. A consolidation method is determined before crossing the LD/LC.

(1) **Consolidation**. Platoons use either the clock technique or the terrain technique in consolidation on the objective.

(2) **All-round security is critical**. The enemy might counterattack from any direction. The platoon leader must evaluate the terrain thoroughly.

(a) **Clock Technique**. In using this technique, the platoon leader designates either a compass direction or the direction of attack as 12 o'clock. The platoon leader uses the clock positions to identify the left and right boundaries for the squads. The platoon leader positions the key weapons along the most likely avenue of approach based on assessment of the terrain. BFVs receive the emphasis of emplacement. The majority of the platoon's firepower is with the BFVs. They should be oriented toward the likely enemy armor counterattack routes and incorporated into the clock technique.

(b) **Terrain Feature Technique**. The platoon leader identifies obvious terrain features as the left and right limits for the squad. In both techniques, the leader ensures that the squad sectors of fire overlap each other and provide mutual support for adjacent platoons. Again, BFVs receive emphasis for positioning. Adjacent platoons must be aware of the BFV sectors.

e. **Reorganization**. Once platoons have consolidated on the objective, they begin to reorganize to continue the attack. Reorganization of the BFV platoon is similar to infantry platoon except the BFV platoon personnel perform PMCS on the BFV.

5. **Summary**. This completes Lesson Two. You should know how to identify tactical control measures, and how to consolidate and reorganize a platoon once the objective is seized. After reviewing all the material in this lesson, you should complete the practice exercise for Lesson Two. Answers and feedback for the questions in the practice exercise will be provided to show you where further study is required.

LESSON 2
PRACTICE EXERCISE

Instructions The following items will test your understanding of the material covered in this lesson. There is only one correct answer for each item. When you have completed the exercise, check your answers with the answer key that follows. If you answer any item incorrectly, review that part of the lesson which contains the portion involved.

Situation: You are a platoon leader. Your unit is preparing to conduct offensive operations. You are reviewing the assigned offensive control measures and issuing instruction on consolidation and reorganization to your squad leaders.

1. You are explaining the purpose of offensive control measures to your squad leaders. You—

 ○ A. state that control measures are only selected by battalions and higher.
 B. tell them that control measures are only used on maps.
 C. state that control measures are not normally related to terrain features.
 D. inform them that control measures are used to regulate or direct the platoon's movement, positions, and fire.

2. Your platoon is preparing to conduct a patrol and must pass through enemy positions without being detected. The company commander is assigning control measures. He—

 A. assigns an infiltration lane.
 B. designates a direction of attack.
 C. establishes a line of departure.
 D. assigns phase lines to the objective area.

3. Prior to an attack, you tell your squad leaders to begin consolidation and reorganization as soon as the objective is seized. The platoon must—

 A. use the clock or terrain feature technique of reorganization.
 B. be ready for an enemy counterattack or prepare to continue the attack.
 C. replace key personnel during consolidation.
 D. prepare defensive positions and exploit the success of the attack.

4. You are discussing consolidation actions with your platoon sergeant. You show him the locations of the coordinating points the company commander assigned. At these points, you—

A. begin the clock technique of consolidation.

B. position your base and flank squads.

C. make sure you tie in with adjacent platoons.

D. make sure guides are posted.